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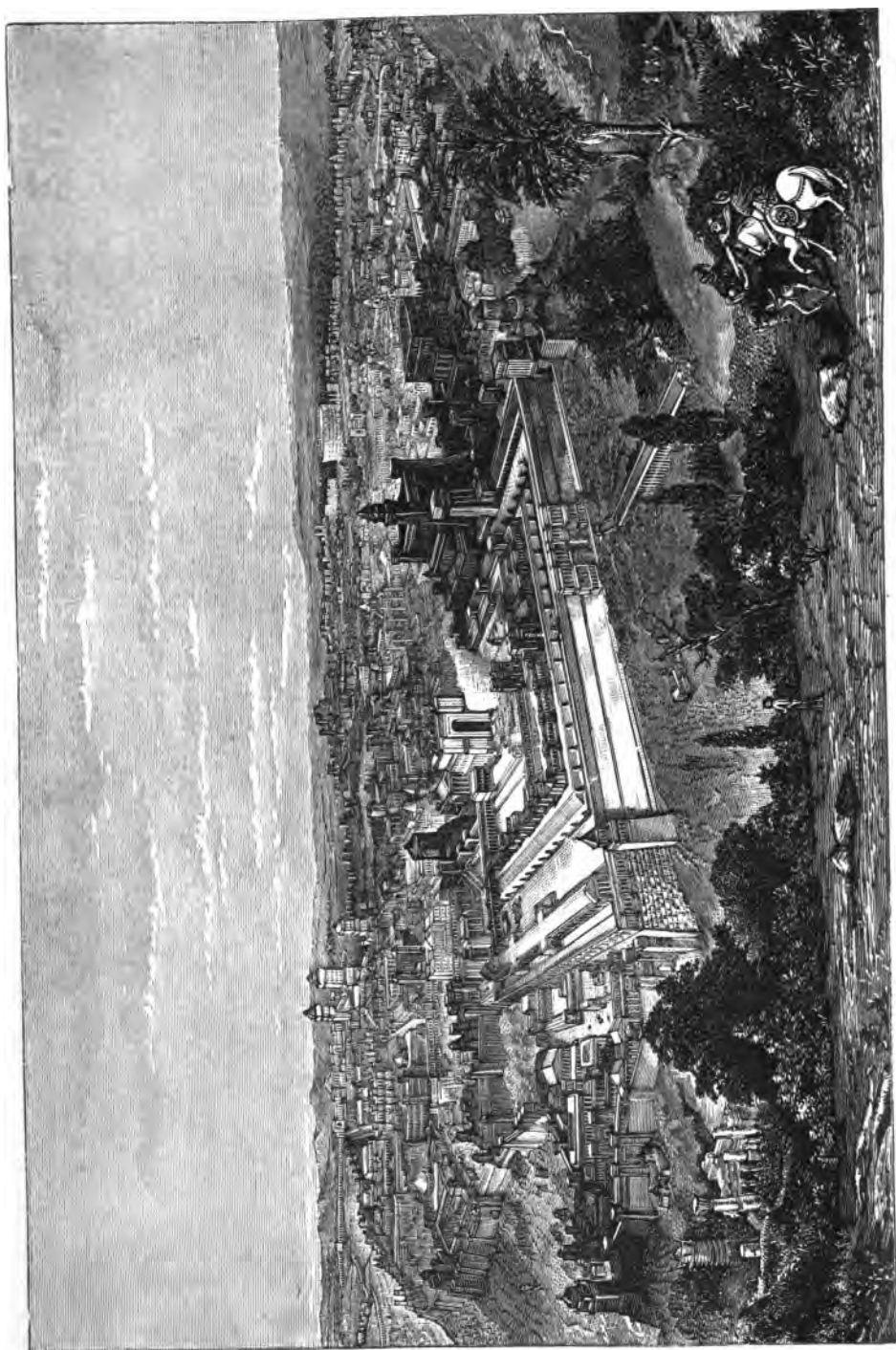
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Sept. 31. 03.

Our position is now so bad that
our position is so bad that we
will have to enter into the
kingdom of heaven.

There is no more time to
lose. We must make haste.





JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

SELECT NOTES
ON THE
INTERNATIONAL
SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

SELECTED BY THE
International Sabbath School Committee,
FOR
1880.

ILLUSTRATED.

EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL. WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS AND CHRONOLOGICAL CHARTS,
TABLE OF SIGNIFICATION AND PRONUN-
CIATION OF PROPER NAMES.

BY
REV. F. N. AND M. A. PELOUBET.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY W. A. WILDE AND COMPANY,
NO. 25 BROMFIELD STREET.



PREFACE.

LEIGH HUNT gave the name of *Indicator* to one of his books, because it was like a bird of the same name which *indicated* to the honey-hunters the places where the bees had laid up their stores of honey.

This volume we have endeavored to make an *Indicator*.

Though more in this than in some previous volumes is expressed in our own words, where we did not find others condensed exactly to our needs, yet chiefly we have confined ourselves to the best expressions from a wide range of authors, given over their own names. And we have this year added *Library References* for the further study of difficult or interesting points, because thus this book becomes an *Indicator*, pointing out the stores of sweet treasures whence these supplies were drawn, and leading teachers and scholars to explore them as far as they have opportunity; and also because no one author can be best and most perfect at all times and on all subjects; and, still further, that each statement of fact or opinion may have the authority and weight which belong to its author.

The lessons for 1880 are the first of a new course of seven years, under the charge of the new International Lesson Committee, appointed at Atlanta, Ga., in 1878. They naturally begin with the first books of the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament is to be studied at the beginning of the year, as best adapted to the religious needs of that season.

We have earnestly endeavored to make this volume more perfect than its predecessors. The *SETTING* of the lessons has been most carefully brought out,—the *Connection* with the previous lesson; the *Intervening History*; the *Places* where the events took place; their *Dates*; and the *Contemporary Secular History*; and every thing that would give a clearer understanding of the Word and its truths.

Pictures have been added, not for ornament, but for illustration. New *Maps*, *Tables of Chronology*, the *Pronunciation* and meaning of *Bible Names*; the *Practical Truths* suggested, the *Great Doctrines taught*, illustrations drawn from history, science, biography, and travels,—by these it is hoped to secure the objects of this work: (1) to learn the exact meaning of God's word; (2) to aid in making it vivid and impressive by facts and illustrations; and (3, and chief) to bring its truths to bear on the heart and life. And may it be as blessed to those who read and study as its preparation has been to

THE AUTHORS.

NATICK, MASS., August, 1879.

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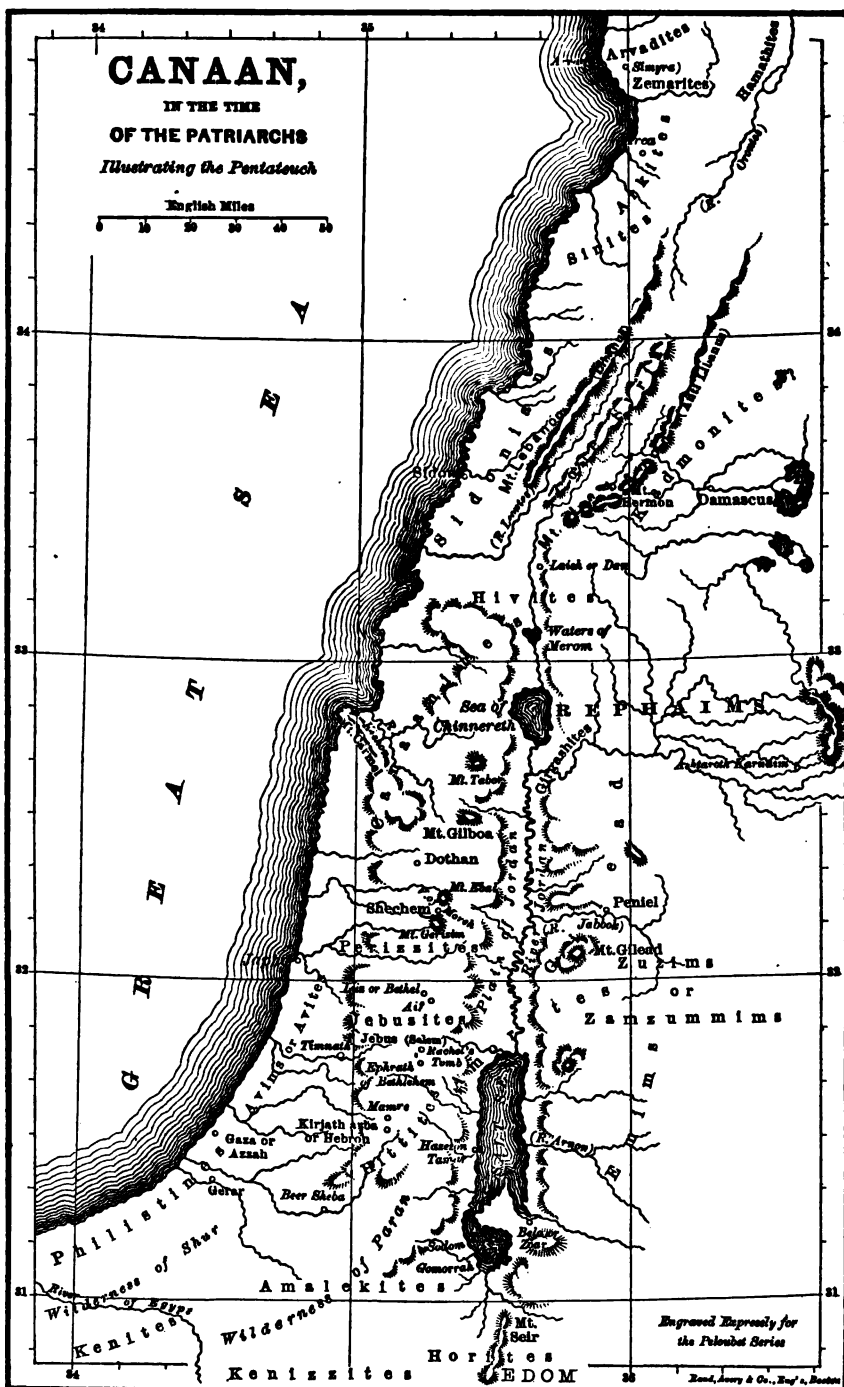
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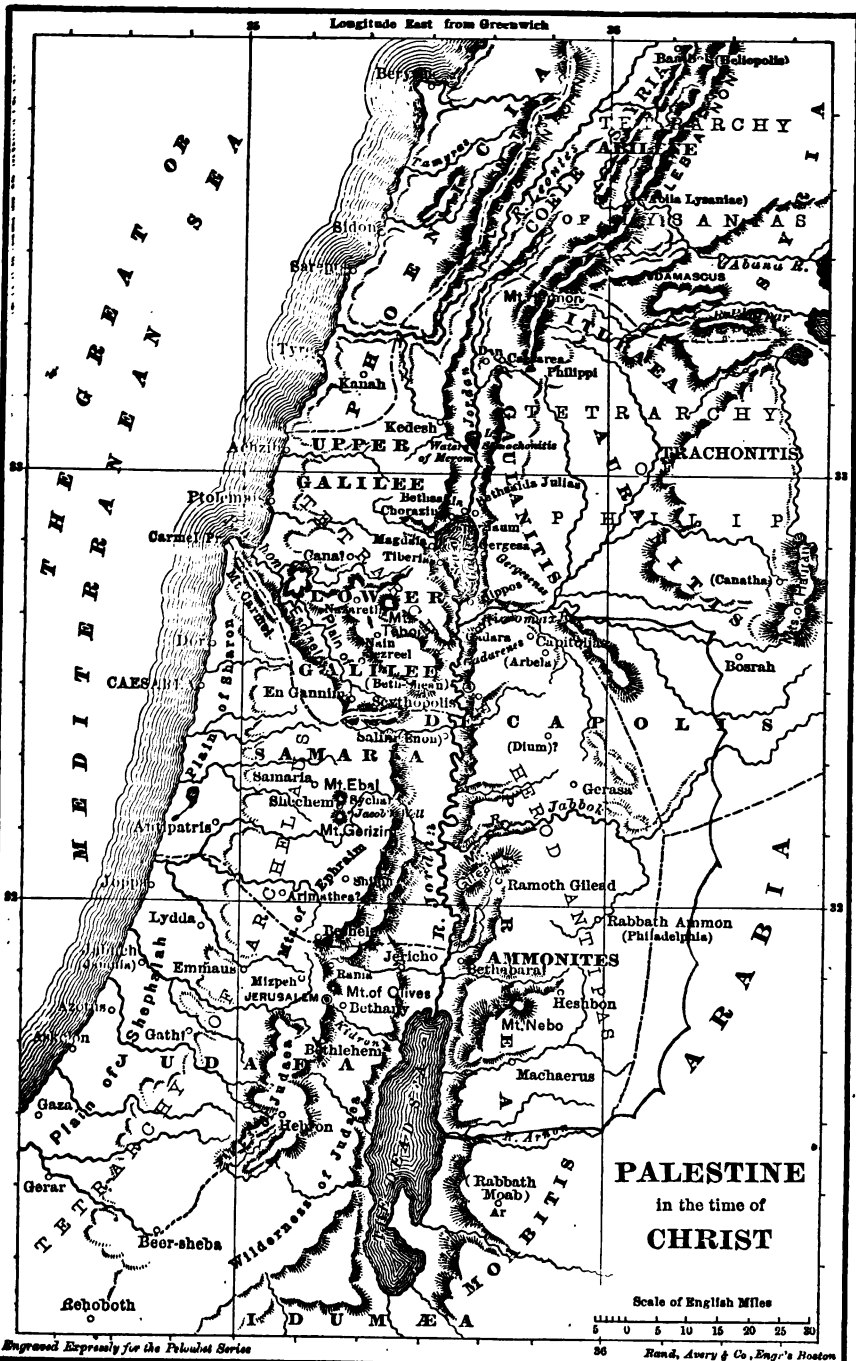
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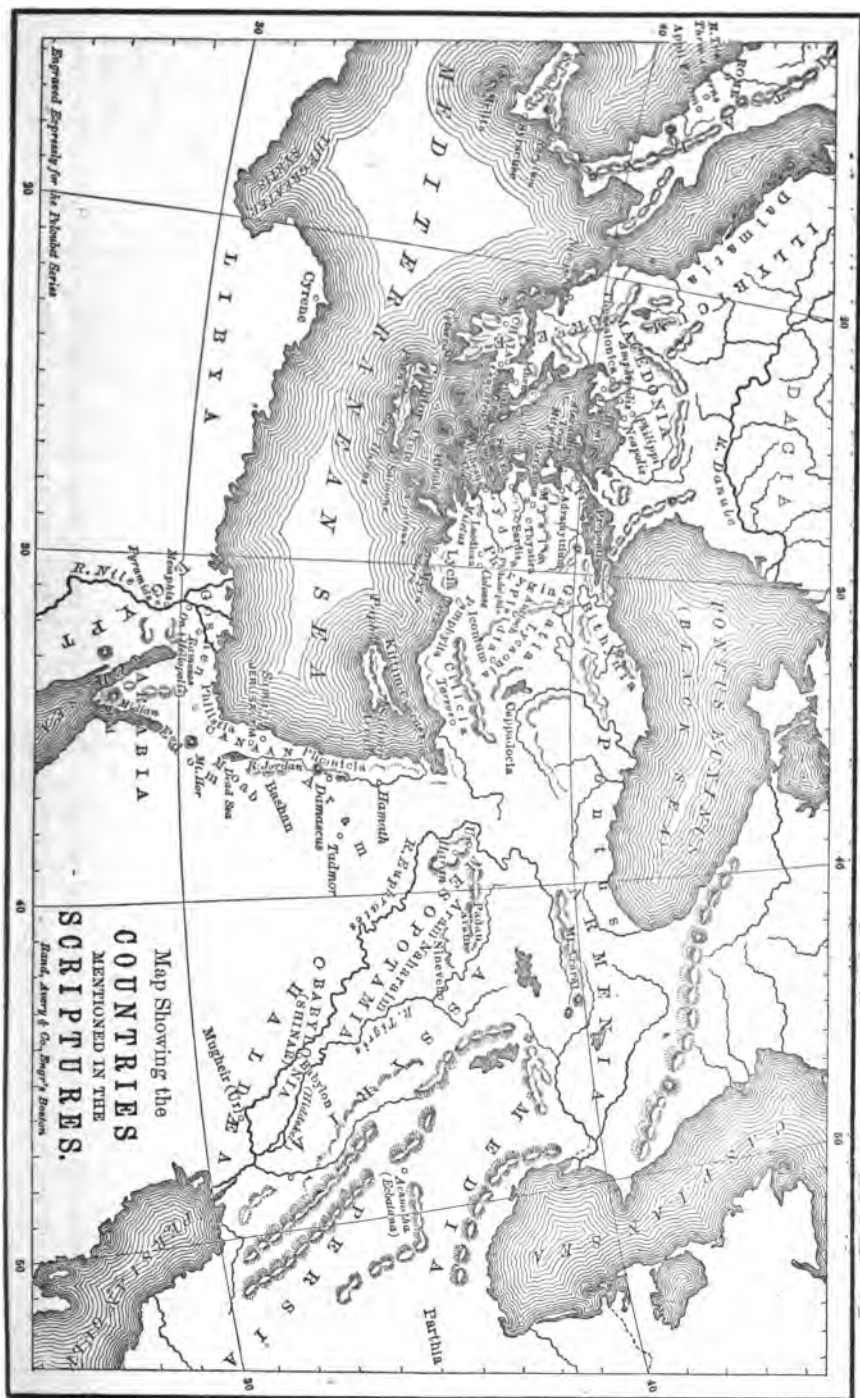
IN THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS

Illustrating the Pentateuch

English Miles







CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PATRIARCHS, FROM ADAM TO MOSES, 2,500 YEARS.

The figures at the end of each line show the date of the birth and death of the corresponding person. This table shows the length of each life; what persons were living at the same time; the rapid decrease of life after the deluge.

By the heavy lines it is easy to see, through how few persons the early history of the race came down to the patriarchs after the flood. Methusaleh lived with Adam 243 years, and with Noah 600 years, and Noah lived within two years of Abraham.

| YEARS FROM THE CREATION. | 100 | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 | 700 | 800 | 900 | 1000 | 1100 | 1200 | 1300 | 1400 | 1500 | 1600 | 1700 | 1800 | 1900 | 2000 | 2100 | 2200 | 2300 | 2400 | 2500 | |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Adam..... | I | | | | | | | | 930 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seth..... | 130 | | | | | | | | | 1042 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enos..... | 235 | | | | | | | | | | 1140 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cainan..... | | | 325 | | | | | | | | | 1235 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mahalaleel..... | | | 395 | | | | | | | | | 1290 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jared..... | | | | 460 | | | | | | | | | 1422 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Enoch..... | | | | | 622 | | | | 987 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Methuselah..... | | | | | | 687 | | | | | | | | | | 1656 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lamech..... | | | | | | | 874 | | | | | | | | | 1651 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Noah..... | | | | | | | | 1056 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2006 | | | | | | |
| Shem..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1558 | 1658 | | | | | 2158 | | | | | |
| Arphaxad..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1693 | | | | | 2126 | | | | | |
| Salah..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1723 | | | | | 2187 | | | | |
| Eber..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1757 | | | | | | | | | |
| Peleg..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1787 | | | | | | | | | |
| Reu..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1819 | | | | | | | | |
| Serug..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1840 | 1907 | | | | | | | |
| Nahor..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2059 | | | | | | | |
| Terah..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2083 | | | | | | |
| Abraham..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2083 | | | | | |
| Isaac..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2108 | 2289 | | | |
| Jacob..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2168 | 2315 | | |
| Levi..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2371 | | |
| Kohath..... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2421 | |
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| A. M. 1656 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DELUGE B. C. 2348 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| YEARS BEFORE CHRIST | 4000 | 3900 | 3800 | 3700 | 3600 | 3500 | 3400 | 3300 | 3200 | 3100 | 3000 | 2900 | 2800 | 2700 | 2600 | 2500 | 2400 | 2300 | 2200 | 2100 | 2000 | 1900 | 1800 | 1700 | 1600 | 1500 |

INTRODUCTION ON THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL.

THE *one Gospel* of Jesus Christ appears in the Sacred Scriptures in *four forms*, — a first, according to Matthew; a second, according to Mark; a third, according to Luke; and a fourth, according to John. Why not in three, five, or twenty forms? or why not in only one form?

There were *four* Gospels, because Jesus was to be commended to four races or classes of men, or to four phases of human thought, — the Jewish, Roman, Greek, and Christian. Had not these exhausted the classes to be reached, there would doubtless have been more Gospels. In all ages, the Jewish, Roman, and Greek natures re-appear among men, and, in fact, make up the world of natural men, while the Christian nature and wants likewise remain essentially the same.

I. The Jew. — The Jews were the chosen people of God. They had the oracles of God, — the true world-religion. They had the only divinely ordained forms of religious worship. Above all, they had the promise of the Messiah. The Jew represents the man with nature inclined to bow to authority, to appreciate divine religious forms, to exalt the peculiar position of the people of God, and to trace the marvellous plan of God in the preparation for the Messiah, and in the progress of his kingdom. The FIRST GOSPEL was prepared by MATTHEW for the Jew. He gives us the Gospel of Jesus, the Messiah of the Jews, the Messianic royalty of Jesus. He places the life and character of Jesus, as lived on earth, alongside the life and character of the Messiah, as sketched in the prophets.

II. The Roman. — The Romans represented the idea of active human power. They embodied that idea in the state or empire. With the consciousness of being born to rule the world, they pushed the idea of national power to universal empire. The man of power became the representative of natural justice in the world. MARK wrote the SECOND GOSPEL. It was substantially the preaching of Peter to the Romans. The Gospel for him must represent the character and career of Jesus, from the Roman point of view, as answering to the idea of divine power, work, law, conquest, and universal sway; must retain its old significance and ever-potent inspiration as the battle-call of the Almighty Conqueror.

III. The Greek. — The Greek was the representative of reason and humanity in the ancient world. In his ideal, intellect and taste held the supreme place. He was a man of reason and taste, of philosophic and æsthetic culture, — the man longing for the perfect manhood, cherishing a world-wide sympathy with mankind. LUKE wrote the THIRD GOSPEL, for the Greek. It has its basis in the gospel which Paul and Luke, by long preaching to the Greeks, had already thrown into the form best suited to commend to their acceptance Jesus as the perfect divine man. Four things made Luke the proper instrument for reaching the Greek. (1) He was of Greek origin. (2) Antioch, the rival of Corinth and Alexandria in culture, was the place of his birth and residence. (3) He was a physician by profession. (4) He was the companion of Paul, the world-apostle. The central idea of his Gospel is Jesus, the perfect, divine man, — the Saviour of the world. It presents the universal grace of God.

IV. The Fourth Gospel is for the CHRISTIAN, the man of faith, the man of the new life, the man who finds the aim of his life in Christ, the man who expects an everlasting life with Christ. He needs especial light concerning the divine life, the modes of sustaining it to its full vigor, its mission in this world, and its issues in immortality. JOHN, the beloved disciple, eminently fitted for the work both by his character and experience, wrote this Gospel.

Condensed from Professor D. S. Gregory's "Why Four Gospels."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

I. Its Authorship.—That this Gospel was written by the apostle Matthew, there is no reason to doubt. Seventeen independent witnesses of the first four centuries attest its genuineness.—*Schaff*.

II. Matthew (the gift of God), or *Levi* (see Mark 2: 14, Luke 5: 27, 29), was a Jewish publican, or tax-gatherer, called by our Lord from the toll-booth, near the Sea of Galilee, where he was performing his secular duty (Luke 5: 27). It is probable that this name (Matthew) was adopted as his new Christian apostolic name. His former avocation doubtless gave him an extended knowledge of human nature, and accurate business habits, which tended to fit him for his great work as an Evangelist.—*Schaff's Popular Commentary*.

III. Its Original Language.—The testimony of the early Church is unanimous that Matthew wrote originally in the Hebrew language. On the other hand, doubt is thrown over this opinion, both by an examination of the statements of the fathers, and by a consideration of peculiar forms of language employed in the Gospel itself. The question is unsettled, the best scholars not agreeing in their judgment concerning it. If there was a Hebrew original, it disappeared at a very early age. The Greek Gospel which we now possess was, it is almost certain, written in Matthew's lifetime; and it is not at all improbable that he wrote the Gospel in both the Greek and Hebrew languages.—*Lyman Abbott*. It is almost certain that our Lord spoke in Greek with foreigners, but with his disciples and the Jewish people in Aramaic (Hebrew).—*Schaff*. The Jewish historian Josephus furnishes an illustration of the fate of the Hebrew original of Matthew. Josephus himself informs us that he wrote his great work, "The History of the Jewish Wars," originally in Hebrew, his native tongue, for the benefit of his own nation, and he afterwards translated it into Greek. No notices of the Hebrew original now survive.—*Professor D. S. Gregory*.

IV. The Date.—The testimony of the early Church is unanimous that Matthew wrote *first* among the Evangelists. Irenæus relates that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching, and founding the Church at Rome (after A. D. 61). It was published *before* the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70).—*Alford*. We would place our present Gospel between A. D. 60 and 66. If there was an original Hebrew Gospel, an earlier date belongs to it.—*Ellicott*.

V. Its Object.—This Gospel was probably written in Palestine for *Jewish Christians*. It is an historical proof that Jesus is the Messiah.—*Schaff*. Matthew is the Gospel for the Jew. It is the Gospel of Jesus, the Messiah of the prophets. This Gospel takes the life of Jesus as it was lived on earth, and his character as it actually appeared, and places them alongside the life and character of the Messiah as sketched in the prophets, the historic by the side of the prophetic, that the two may appear in their marvellous unity and in their perfect identity.—*Professor Gregory*.

*Disputed Joseph - 8 1/2 coming Sda - 5-2: 5-3:
 Tim. carried into the Temple 6:6 i.e.
 Jer - 628 B.C.*

FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON I. — JANUARY 4, 1880.

THE INFANT MESSIAH. — MATT. 2: 1-12.

TIME. — Jesus Christ was born in the year of the world 4000; four years before the date from which we count the years of the Lord, which is A. M. (Anno Mundi: year of the world) 4004. So that Christ was born B. C. 4, or 1884 (not 1880) years ago.

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN. — The date of this lesson was several weeks after the birth of Christ, or about midwinter B. C. 4.

PLACE. — Bethlehem of Judæa, a village five or six miles south of Jerusalem, and east of the road to Hebron. (See below.)

RULERS. — Augustus Cæsar emperor of Rome; Herod, called the Great (the first of the seven Herods named in the New Testament), king of Judæa (34th year), under Augustus.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. — The Roman Empire the universal empire of the known world. "The empire now at peace with all the world, the Temple of Janus shut." — *Hayden's Dict. Dates.* Great Britain had been conquered by the Romans about fifty years before Christ; but "for nearly a hundred years after that date, the history of Britain is almost a blank." — *Encyc. Brit.* Diodorus Siculus, the Greek historian, and Strabo, the Greek geographer, were living at this time. Greece, though subject to Rome, "continued to be the school of letters and art. She was crowded with temples and statues. Her schools of philosophy and rhetoric flourished." — *American Cyclopædia.*

CHRONOLOGY. — Herod died just before the passover, A. U. C. 750. (A. U. C.: Anno Urbe Condita, the year of the founding the city of Rome.) The probable date of our Lord's birth is a few months before Herod's death, either towards the end of A. U. C. 749, or just at the beginning of 750, i.e., in B. C. 5 or B. C. 4 of the vulgar era, which erroneously places our Lord's birth A. U. C. 754. Wieseler decides the month to be December, January, or February, with a probability in favor of the last; but this latest date allows only two months from our Lord's birth to Herod's death, which is barely sufficient for the intervening events. The earlier dates, January, B. C. 4, or December, B. C. 5, seem on the whole more probable. — *Canon Cook.* As much confusion exists in the minds of some, in consequence of the reckoning from two eras, we insert a list of corresponding years. It should be carefully noted that the numbers are *ordinal*, standing for "first," "second," &c.

| | CHRIST BORN. | | | | OUR DATE. | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|-----------|------|---------|
| Year of the world . . . | 4000 | 4001 | 4002 | 4003 | 4004 | 4005 | 4006 |
| Year of Rome . . . | 749 | 750 | 751 | 752 | 753 | 754 | 755 |
| Year of Christ . . . | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 A. D. |

If we fix the date at the close of 749, the common era is *four* years too late, not five, since we reckon from the close of the fifth year. — *Schaff.*

INTRODUCTION.

In the first chapter, the Evangelist points out the part which the *Jewish* people had in connection with the Messiah. Christ's genealogy, and his birth from the Virgin, show that salvation was of the Jews. The second chapter, which records the arrival of the Magi from the East, presents the interest of the *Gentile* world in Christ. — *Lange.* In this lesson we have "types of four classes of men which exist still, namely: (1) those who earnestly seek the truth; (2) those who rest in the letter of the truth; (3) those who are fearfully alarmed at the truth; and (4) those who are affectionate guardians of the truth. The Magi represent the first, the scribes and Pharisees the second, Herod the third, and Joseph and Mary the fourth." — *The Genius of the Gospel.*

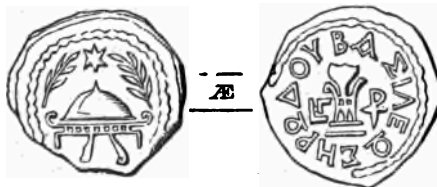
1. Now¹ when Jesus was born in | Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of | Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

¹ Luke 2: 4-7.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **When Jesus was born.** The parents of Jesus were living in Nazareth, and came to Bethlehem to be enrolled for taxation, as here was their family home. The account of the circumstances of the birth of Jesus is given in Matt. 1: 18-25, and Luke 2: 1-20. **In Bethlehem of Judæa.** A village five or six miles south of Jerusalem. Its name, Bethlehem (*house of bread*), was due to the fertility of the adjacent cornfields. The modern village contains about five hundred houses, a famous convent, within which is a large, rock-hewn cave which the monks point out as the manger where Christ was born. Bethlehem is one of the oldest towns in Palestine, and has a sacred history. Near it is the tomb where Jacob buried Rachel. The supposed site is still shown to travellers. In the adjoining fields Ruth gleaned for grain, and gained a husband. Here David was born, and anointed king (Gen. 35: 16, 19. Ruth 1: 19. 1 Sam. 16: 1-13. 2 Sam. 23: 15-17). And here, in the fourth century after Christ, Jerome, fleeing from persecution, accomplished the great work of his life, the Vulgate, the translation of the Scriptures into Latin, the accepted version of the Roman Catholic Church. It is called Bethlehem in Judah or Bethlehem-Judah (Judg. 17: 7, 8, 9. 1 Sam. 17: 12), to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun near the Sea of Galilee (Josh. 19: 15). It was also called Ephrath the fruitful (Gen.

35: 19; 48: 7), or Ephrathah (Mic. 5: 2). — *Abbott's Notes on Matthew.* **The days of Herod the king.** Near the close of the reign of Herod, who died in the year of Rome 750, in March, just before the passover. — *Ellicott.* This was the founder of the Herodian family: he was called Herod the Great. He was the second son of Antipater, a governor of Judæa, an Idumæan. Though aliens by race, the Herods were Jews in faith, and from the



COIN OF HEROD THE GREAT.

time of their conversion remained constant to their new religion. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary.* He possessed energy of character, but an unscrupulous ambition, and was remorselessly cruel. He was made governor of Galilee at the early age of fifteen, and distinguished himself by his campaign against the brigands who infested the mountains. He transferred his allegiance without scruple from Cassius to Antony, and from Antony to Cæsar, as in succession they secured the possession of the political power of Rome. By Antony's influence he was made king of Judæa, and on Antony's fall was confirmed in his position by Cæsar. He rebuilt the temple in great magnificence in Jerusalem, which is consequently known in history as Herod's Temple, to distinguish it from Solomon's Temple: he also constructed another on Mount Gerizim for the Samaritans, and established heathen worship in Cæsarea for the Romans. His course on hearing that another "king of the Jews" was born was quite in keeping with all that secular history records of his character. He died miserably in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-eighth year of his reign. — *Abbott.* **Wise men from the East.** The Greek word is *Magi*, sages. Originally a class of priests among the Persians and Medes, who formed the king's privy council, and cultivated astrology, medicine, and occult natural science. They are frequently referred to by ancient authors. Afterwards the term was applied to all Eastern philosophers. — *Schaff's Popular Commentary.* Among the Greeks the word was commonly applied with a tone of scorn to the impostors who claimed supernatural knowledge; and *magic* was in fact the art of the Magi, and so the word was commonly used throughout the Roman world when the New Testament was written. Simon Magus is Simon the sorcerer. There was, however, side by side with this, a recognition of the higher ideas of which the word was capable, and we can hardly think that the writer of the Gospel would have used it in its lower sense. With him, as with Plato, the Magi were thought of as observers of the heavens, students of the secrets of nature. — *Ellicott's New Testament Commentary.* **From the East.** This is a different form, and used in a different sense from the word "east" in verse 2. Here it should be translated "the Far East," and in verse 2, the star "in the east." "The Far East" refers to Persia, where the wise men belonged, and "the East" is Babylonia or Chaldæa: or the direction in which they saw the star. — *From Upham's Wise Men of the East.* To Jerusalem. They would naturally come to Jerusalem, as the capital of Judæa, and the central place of Jewish religion.

2. Saying, Where is he that is born¹ King of the Jews? for we have seen his star² in the east, and are come to worship him.

3. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all

¹ Chap. 21: 5; 27: 11. Isa. 9: 6, 7. Jer. 23: 5. Luke 19: 38. John 1: 49. ² Comp. Num. 24: 17.

2. Where is he? The Magi express here the feeling which the Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, tell us sixty or seventy years later had been for a long time very widely diffused. Everywhere throughout the East men were looking for the advent of a great king who was to rise from among the Jews. It had fermented in the minds of men, heathens as well as Jews, and would have led them to welcome Jesus as the Christ, had he come in accordance with their expectations. — *Ellicott*. Virgil, who lived a little before this, owns that a child from heaven was looked for, who should restore the golden age, and take away sin. But these Magi were moved, doubtless, by a divine impulse. — *Jacobus*. Why should the new star lead these wise men to look for a king of the Jews? 1. These wise men from Persia were the most like the Jews, in religion, of all nations in the world. They believed in one God, they had no idols, they worshipped light as the best symbol of God. 2. The general expectation spoken of above. 3. This arose largely from the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, carrying with them the hope and the promise of a divine Redeemer (Isa. 9, 11. Dan. 7). 4. Daniel himself was a prince and chief among this very class of wise men. His prophecies were made known to them; and the calculations by which he pointed to the very time when Christ should be born became, through the Book of Daniel, a part of their ancient literature. — *P.* King of the Jews. The Messiah, King of the Jews, and to be the King and Saviour of all the world, whose kingdom shall know no end. We have seen in the east. Seen by them in Eastern countries, or seen in the eastern sky. The first was certainly the fact, but the second is the probable meaning here. — *Popular Commentary*. His star in the east. We learn from astronomical calculations that a remarkable conjunction of the planets of our system took place a short time before the birth of our Lord. In the year of Rome 747 (about two years before the received date of Christ's birth, the exact date of which is, however, uncertain), on the 29th of May there was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces in the part of the heavens noted in astrological science as that in which the signs denoted the greatest and most noble events. On the 29th of September, in the same year, another conjunction of the same planets took place, and on the 5th of December a third. Supposing the Magi to have seen the first of these conjunctions, they saw it actually in the east; for on the 29th of May it would rise three and a half hours before sunrise. If they then took their journey, and arrived at Jerusalem in a little more than five months, and if they performed the route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in the evening, as is implied, the December conjunction would be before them in the direction of Bethlehem, one and a half hours east of the meridian at sunset. These circumstances would seem to form a remarkable coincidence with the history in our text. They are in no way inconsistent with the word "star," understood in its wider astrological meaning. Nor is this explanation of the star directing them to Bethlehem at all repugnant to the plain words of vs. 9, 10, importing its motion from south-east to south-west, — the direction of Bethlehem. — *Alford*. The expectations of the Magi were aroused by the remarkable conjunction, and their watching was rewarded by the sight of the miraculous star. This is, perhaps, the best theory. It recognizes the astronomical fact, and teaches even more fully the lesson that the expectant study of nature leads to the discovery of the supernatural. Equally with the last view it shows us the Magi, because earnestly seeking the Messiah, led to him by nature, by science, if astrology can be so termed. — *Popular Commentary*. This last is probably the true theory. So Abbott and Upham: this conjunction was a John the Baptist that heralded the true Star out of Jacob, miraculously shown in the heavens (see Illustrative, I.). To worship him. To honor and adore him as the Messiah, the King, and the Saviour.

3. Herod the king . . . was troubled. Josephus represents these troubles as raised by the Pharisees who prophesied a revolution. Herod as a foreigner and usurper feared one who was born King of the Jews. The people, worn away by seditions and slaughters, feared fresh tumults and wars. There may be also a trace of the popular notion that the times of the Messiah would be ushered in by great tribulations. — *Alford*. And all Jerusalem with him. The excitement naturally spread throughout the city. — *Ellicott*. The progress of religion, the coming of Christ, is always a source of trouble to the wicked.

4. The chief priests and scribes. The chief priests were probably the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided (2 Chron. xxiii. 8. Luke i. 5),

the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet;

6. 'And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for^a out of thee shall come a Governor,^b that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privi-

ly called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them,

¹ Mic. 5: 2. ² John 7: 42. ³ Isa. 40: 11. Ezek. 34: 23.

but the term may have included those who had, though only for a time, held the office of high priest. The "scribes" were the interpreters of the law, casuists, and collectors of the traditions of the elders, for the most part Pharisees. The meeting thus convened was not necessarily a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, or great council, and may have been only as a committee of notables called together for a special purpose. With a characteristic subtlety, as if trying to gauge the strength of their Messianic hopes, Herod acts as if he himself shared them, and asks where the Christ, the expected Messiah, the "anointed" of the Lord (Ps. 2: 2; 45: 7; 89: 20) was to be born. — *Ellicott*. Scribes (writers). The official copyists of the Scriptures, who naturally became its expounders. — *Schaff*. Where Christ should be born. Where the Scriptures taught that he should be born.

5. And they said; i.e., the chief priests, &c. The answer seems to have been given without any hesitation, as a matter perfectly well understood, and settled by divine authority. — *Alexander*. Bethlehem of Judæa. See ver. 1. Thus it is written. What is quoted in the next verse. By the prophet. Micah, in chap. 5: 2.

6. And thou. Freely quoted from the Greek version (the Septuagint) then in common use. The Hebrew is literally: "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, too small to be among the thousands of Judah [i.e., the towns where the heads of thousands resided, the chief towns of the subdivisions of the tribes]: but of thee shall come forth unto me one who is to be ruler in Israel." The variations are undoubtedly intentional and explanatory. It is not evident whether the passage was quoted by the scribes, or inserted as an explanation by Matthew. Instead of Ephrata, we find "the land of Judah" (as a better-known name of the place); and instead of "too small to be among," we have "art not the least," which is a sort of question introducing the insignificance of the place, and implying its moral greatness as the birthplace of the Messiah. — *Popular Commentary*. Princes is, according to a usual figure, put for the towns where the princes, or heads of thousands, lived. For gives the reason for the greatness in spite of the insignificance. Shall come a governor. This includes both ruling and feeding; the meaning is, shall be a careful and affectionate ruler. — *Schaff*.

7. Privily, secretly . . . diligently, with care (ascertained exactly). Herod intended fraudulent or treacherous concealment. His motive was to avoid popular excitement, which might prevent his murderous plot. Vs. 13-16. — *Binney's People's Commentary*. What time the star appeared. He asked this in order that he might know how old the child was, and under what age he must slay all the children, so as to include this young king of the Jews.

8. Bethlehem was but a short six miles from Jerusalem. "Diligently," better, as before, *exactly*. So far as the mission became known, it would impress the people with the belief that he, too, shared their hopes, and was ready to pay his homage to the new-born King. — *Ellicott*. It was a diplomatic lie, based on the truth. — *Schaff*.

9. Lo, the star. It is not likely that they were led by the star to Jerusalem. They went to the holy city because they were warned of God so to do, or because they knew that this was the place to inquire, as the seat of the Jewish religion. And, behold, the token, whatever it was, that first appeared to them, now unexpectedly re-appeared, and moved perceptibly on, till it took a marked station over the very house. It must have been near the earth to indicate the dwelling. — *Jacobus*. Saw in the east. Not in the eastern part of the heavens, but which they had seen when they were in the East.

9. Stood over where the young child was. This may mean, *over that part of Beth-*

till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they

had opened their treasures, ¹they presented unto him gifts; ²gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12. And being warned of God³ in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

¹ Ps. 62: 10. ² Isa. 60: 6. Chap. 1: 20; 27: 19. ³ Gen. 20: 6; 31: 11. Num. 14: 6. Job 33: 15.

lehem where the young child was, which they might have ascertained by inquiry; or it may mean, *over the whole town of Bethlehem*. If it is to be understood as standing *over the house*, and thus indicating to the Magi the position of the object of their search, the whole incident must be regarded as miraculous. But this is not necessarily implied. — *Alford*.

10. **They rejoiced.** This was, most of all, a revelation to their souls, and it filled them with joy. The same mark that had been given them at first was again vouchsafed, and they were doubly assured. "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." — *Jacobus*.

11. **When they were come.** They found (1) a child, (2) a saviour, (3) a king. **House.** The throng brought together by the requirement of the census had dispersed, and Joseph and Mary were no longer in the stable (Luke 2, 7). **With Mary.** Possibly Joseph was not present at the time; possibly he is not mentioned because the Evangelist recognized the fact that he was not in reality, but only in seeming, the father of the child. — *Abbott*. **And worshipped him.** Three acts are here, — *falling down, worshipping, and offering*, — the first, the worship of the body; the second, of the soul; the third, of our goods. With these three, our bodies, our souls, our goods, we are to worship him. Without them all, worship is but a lame and maimed sacrifice, neither fit for wise men to give, nor Christ to receive." — *Dr. Mark Frank, in Christ in Literature*.

Opened their treasures. The word points to caskets, or chests, which they had brought with them. — *Ellicott*. These were the rarest products of the East, — an offering such as any monarch might have had presented to him by the ambassadors from any foreign prince. — *Dr. Hanna*. **Gifts.** Setting forth greater truths than they knew, they offered, to the Son of man and Son of God, myrrh, hinting at the resurrection of the dead; the royal gold; and frankincense that breathes prayer, — "myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king, frankincense to God." — *Upham's Wise Men*. **Frankincense.** A gum resin, obtained by an incision made in the trunk of a tree of the genus *Boswellia*. It occurs in commerce in semi-opaque round or oblong tears. It is of a yellow or yellowish-brown hue, — the best being almost colorless. Valued for its sweet odor when burnt; used for incense. It was, in olden times, accounted one of the most valuable products of the East. — *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **Myrrh**, an aromatic gum highly prized by the ancients, and used in incense and perfumes. It distils from incisions from a small thorny tree, which grows chiefly in Arabia. — *Abbott on Matthew*.

12. **Being warned of God.** It seems probable, that, after their homage on the evening of their arrival, they retired, possibly to the "inn" of Bethlehem, and were then, in their sleep, warned not to return to Jerusalem the following day, but to make their way to the fords of Jordan, and so to escape from the tyrant's jealous pursuit. So ends all that we know of the visit of the Magi. These "wise men" have been regarded as the first-fruits of the outlying heathen world, the earnest of the future ingathering. — *Ellicott's N. T. Com.*



WORSHIPPERS.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On the wise men, and the star in the east, the most complete and instructive help is found in a small book by Professor Francis W. Upham, LL.D., called "The Wise Men: who they were." See also the article, "Star of the Wise Men," by Mr. Pritchard, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible;" and compare Mill on "Pantheism," Part II., p. 369, *seq.*

and Bishop Ellicott's "Lectures," p. 72. For the general expectation of a Messiah at this time, see the splendid prophecy in the fourth eclogue of Virgil, and Trench's "Christ the Desire of all Nations; or, The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom." Herod's career and end are well illustrated by Shakspeare's "Richard III." See Robertson's Sermons, second series, "The Star in the East."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. About two hundred and seventy-five years ago, in December of the year 1604, the great astronomer Kepler saw a strange sight in the heavens, — a sight which occurs only once, or rather is repeated two or three times at one period, once in eight hundred years. It was the conjunction of the bright planets Jupiter and Saturn, close together at one point of the heavens. Five months later, in the following March, the wonder was repeated in a more wonderful way: Mars joined with Jupiter and Saturn, a fiery trygon in the fiery signs. The attention of the whole astronomical world was called to the sight; and this seemed to draw the notice to another sight, — the appearing of a new star in the constellation of the Serpent. First seen in October, 1604, it grew more and more brilliant till it glowed like a planet; then its lustre waned, its white light turned to yellow, then to red, grew duller and dimmer, and finally, at the end of two years, had vanished altogether. These unusual occurrences led Professor Kepler, who was as religious as he was scientific, to think that they might help to explain the strange star which the wise men saw in the east, and how it was that the star in the east led them to the King of the Jews; whether a conjunction of planets like this was the star in the east, or whether it led them to see and recognize the real star of the east, as this conjunction accompanied the new star which Kepler saw in the same part of the heavens, a blazing, burning world. The conjunction could occur but once in eight hundred years: take twice eight hundred years, and it brings us to within one or two years of the date of Christ's birth, the *exact* date of which is unknown. Several great astronomers, since Kepler's day, have made the same calculations, — Professor Pritchard of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Encke; and it rests on assured grounds, that, about the time of Christ's birth in the month of May, occurred this conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, rising about three hours before sunrise, and therefore seen in the east. Suppose these wise men of Persia, the Far East, seeing this wonderful sight in their clear skies, had started on their journey about the end of May: it would require at least seven months. The planets were observed to separate slowly till the end of July, when they slowly drew together again, and were in conjunction in September, when the wise men would have reached the nearer East on the border of the desert. "At that time there can be no doubt that Jupiter would present to astronomers a very brilliant spectacle. It was then at its most brilliant apparition, for it was at its nearest approach both to the sun and the earth. The glorious spectacle continued almost unaltered for several days, when the planets again slowly separated, came to a halt, and then Jupiter again approached to a conjunction for the third time with Saturn, just at the time the Magi may be supposed to have entered the holy city. And, to complete the fascination of the tale, about half an hour after sunset the two planets might be seen from Jerusalem, hanging, as it were, in the meridian, and suspended over Bethlehem in the distance." — *Condensed from Upham.*

II. Mrs. Judith S. Grant, late missionary to Persia, is buried in the court of a church in Ooroomiah; which the Nestorians believe to have been the residence of the renowned Zoroaster, the great chief of the Persian religion. They say that Zoroaster was a disciple of Jeremiah, from whom he learned about the Messiah, and taught of him to his disciples. As their tradition is remarkably corroborated by Abulpharagius, I will quote his language: "Zoroaster taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should conceive, and that, as soon as the child was born, a star would appear blazing, even at noonday, with undiminished lustre. 'You, my sons,' exclaimed the venerable seer, 'will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star, follow it wheresoever it leads you, and adore the mysterious child, — offering your gifts to him with the profoundest humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the heavens.'" — *Memoir of Mrs. Judith S. Grant.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 1, 2. Those are the only true *wise men* who use their learning to find out heaven. — *W. Austin.*
2. Christ is wont to catch every man in the way of his own craft, — magians with a star, fishers with fish. — *Chrysostom.*
3. There may be true servants of God in places where we should not expect to find them. — *Ryle.*

4. It is not always those who have most religious privileges who give Christ most honor. — *Ryle*.

5. Christ is the desire of all nations, the need of all men.

6. There are many things which become "stars of the East" to us, to lead us to Christ : 1. The star of science, the knowledge of God's works. 2. The star of yearning for more light : Goethe's dying cry, "More light," is the cry of the soul. 3. The need of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. 4. The need of help in trouble. 5. The hunger of the heart for love. 6. The star of experience of what God has already done for us. 7. The star of hope, — for the redemption of the world.

7. We must look up to heaven to be guided rightly on earth, as ships are guided on the ocean by the stars.

8. Wicked men are troubled by that which brings hope to the world, — as by revivals, temperance reform, preaching, and whatever interferes with unrighteous gains and pleasures.

9. Vers. 1, 9. Here is a test of our character, — whether we rejoice, or are troubled, at the coming of Christ and his kingdom.

10. Ver. 6. To the smallest and poorest may come the greatest blessings and glory through receiving Christ.

11. Ver. 11. Reverence for the great and good, and worship of God, are marks of true wisdom and greatness.

12. Christ became a child, that children might learn how to be Christians in childhood.

13. Bringing gifts to Christ is a part of worship.

14. Ver. 12. God makes his angels ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation.

15. Herod's wicked policy failed. It is vain to fight against God.

LESSON II. — JANUARY 11, 1880.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. — MATT. 2 : 13-23.

TIME. — In the winter of B.C. 4, January or February, when Christ was a few weeks old.

PLACES. — Bethlehem of Judæa, Nazareth in Galilee, and Egypt, probably the town of Mâtārē'eh, a few miles north-east of Cal'rō. It is near Leontopolis, where, later, the Jewish temple of Onias stood.

PERSONS. — Herod the Great; Joseph, Mary, and the child Jesus; and Herod Archelā'us, son of Herod the Great, and succeeding to half his dominions.

RULERS. — Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome, 23d year; Herod the Great, 34th and last year as king of Judæa, &c.; and Herod Archelaus his son, first year.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. — The census (Luke 2 : 1) still in progress. Herod falls sick and dies at Jericho, April 1, B.C. 4, aged 70 years, five days after he had executed his own son Antipater. Archelaus his son greeted as king, April 2. Riot and massacre of the Jews in the temple at the passover, April 10.

THE CONNECTION.

The wise men had returned to their own Far East country. Mary and Joseph had before this gone to Jerusalem, and presented the child in the temple, according to the law, when he was forty days old, and returned to Bethlehem. It is quite possible that Joseph had, during his protracted stay in his paternal town, seen reasons for concluding to make it the place of his future residence. Remembering that Christ was to come from this place, he might naturally desire to render this fact evident concerning Jesus, by removing there; and the policy of this is demonstrated by the reproach which Jesus afterwards incurred, as not having apparently come from Bethlehem, but from Nazareth in Galilee, "out of which ariseth no prophet." As a comparatively poor man, he must necessarily have sought employment at his trade during his first stay at Bethlehem; and this may have been so much better than he had found at Nazareth, as to encourage his purpose of remaining in the city of his fathers' sepulchres. This is not mere conjecture; for we find, that, when Joseph returned with his family from Egypt, it was his intention to remain in Judæa, doubtless at Bethlehem (Matt. 2 : 21, 22). — *Kittó*. How his plans were changed, and why, is shown in this lesson.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word :

for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt :

15. And was there until the death

EXPLANATORY.

13. **And when they.** The wise men of the East. **Behold.** How long after the departure of the Magi, is unknown, but it must have been very soon. **The (an) angel of the Lord.** When the word of God announces the ministration of angels, bearing warning, consolations, messages of wisdom, the heart receives the doctrine, even against the cautions of sceptical reason. The long line of heavenly visitants shines in unsullied brightness as high above the beliefs of an early age as the stars are above the vapors and the dust of earth. While patriarchs, prophets, and apostles show all the deficiencies of their own period, and are stained with human passions, the angelic beings, judged by the most fastidious requirements of these later ages, are without spot or blemish. They were as beautiful, as spiritual, as pure and noble, at the beginning as at the close of the old dispensation. The angelic ministration helps populate heaven with spiritual inhabitants. The ancients seem to have striven to express universal divine presence by multiplying their gods. To the Greek or Roman, the rejection of so many divinities must have left the fields, the mountains, the cities and temples, very bare. The angels come in that the air might still be populous, but no longer with false gods. Instead of a realm of conflicting divinities, there was a household, the father looking in benignity upon his radiant family. — *Beecher's Life of Christ.* **Flee into Egypt.** In Egypt the fugitives were safe. It was, moreover, almost another Judæa. Of the five quarters of Alexandria, with 300,000 free citizens, Jews occupied more than two. They had had a temple of their own at Leontopolis, in the Delta, for about 160 years, though they preferred to go up to that at Jerusalem; the Greek translation of the Bible, which had already widely taken the place of the Hebrew original, had been made in Egypt. Nor would it be difficult for Joseph to find support, as the different classes of Jewish workmen in Egypt were associated in guilds, which maintained those out of employment. — *Geikie's Life of Christ.* **Egypt,** "as near as a Roman province, and independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews, was an easy and convenient refuge." — *Alford.* **Until I bring thee word.** What thou shalt do (vers. 19-22). All things were not revealed to Joseph at once; and thus his faith was exercised, as was Abraham's. — *A. Binney.* **For Herod.** (See Illustrative, II., last lesson.) **Will seek . . . to destroy.** Herod was wicked enough to kill any number of his fellow-men that he himself might reign. It was a vain policy. All wickedness is useless. No permanent good, no solid advantage, was ever secured but by good and righteous means. Christ came to die, and not to reign, or but to reign by dying. Herod's wrath did, therefore, but subserve the *real* purposes of God. — *Kitts.*

14. **When he arose.** In the morning. Note the prompt and wise obedience of one who fully trusted the Lord. **He took the young child and his mother.** The form adopted here, as in the preceding verse, is significantly reverential. In a narrative of common life the natural expression would have been, "his wife and the young child." — *Ellicott.* **By night.** Lest they should be discovered. **Departed into Egypt.** It is left to apocryphal legends, immortalized by the genius of Italian art, to tell us how, on the way, the dragons came and bowed to him, the lions and leopards adored him, the roses of Jericho blossomed wherever his footsteps trod, the palm-trees at his command bent down to give them dates, the robbers were overawed by his majesty (and owed their preservation to Dismas, one of the band, who was afterwards the penitent thief of the crucifixion), and the journey was miraculously shortened. They tell us further, how at his entrance into the country, all the idols of the land of Egypt fell from their pedestals with a sudden crash, and lay shattered and broken upon their faces, and how many wonderful cures of leprosy and demoniac possession were wrought by his word. All this wealth and prodigality of superfluous, aimless, and unmeaning miracle furnishes a strong contrast to the truthful simplicity of the Gospel narrative. St. Matthew neither tells us where the holy family abode in Egypt, nor how long their exile continued; but ancient legends say that they remained two years absent from Palestine, and lived at Matare'eh, a few miles north-east of Cairo, where a fountain was long shown of which Jesus had made the water fresh, and an ancient sycamore under which they had rested. — *Farrar's Life of Christ.*

of Herod : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord¹ by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof,

from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken² by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for*

¹ Hos. 11: 1.

² Jer. 31: 15.

15. **Until the death of Herod.** On the first day of the following April. For description of his death see Illustrative, I. How long they remained after this, is uncertain. **Fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord.** Showing that the prophets were inspired, and what inspiration is; namely, it is the Lord speaking through men. **By the prophet.** Hos. 11: 1. **Out of Egypt . . . called my son.** It is evident that in their primary intention these words do not refer to the child Jesus, but to the children of Israel collectively regarded as God's dear son, and the calling out of Egypt is *their* deliverance from the house of bondage there, and from the yoke of their Egyptian taskmasters. But the words of Scripture being words of God, and, therefore, deep words, which take their stand at the heart of things, look many ways, may have one fulfilment, and then another and another, and at last a crowning fulfilment. So that the words of Hosea were so overruled by the Holy Ghost, that, while they looked back to one signal mercy of God, they looked on to a far greater mercy, but one of exactly the same kind, with an inner as well as an outer resemblance. The words of Hosea were not accommodated to Christ, but were most truly fulfilled in him, — a double fulfilment, the second more glorious than the first. Nor should we err if we ascribed to them one fulfilment more in the church of the redeemed. Egypt is always represented to us in the Scriptures as a land of darkness, idolatry, slavery, for the body and the spirit, — a type and symbol of the world. What wonder, then, that when God calls from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from the worship of idols to the worship of himself, it should be styled a calling out of Egypt? God calls us as his sons. — *Trench's Westminster Sermons.*

16. **When he saw that he was mocked.** Foiled, baffled in this plot. — *Jacobus.* **Wroth.** Angry, in a rage. **Slew all the children;** i.e., male children. — *Abbott.* The population of Bethlehem could hardly have been more than 2,000, and the number of children under two years of age in that number would be between 20 and 30. It was an act every way in harmony with Herod's character. Tormented with incurable disease, and yet more incurable suspicion; so fiendish in his cruelty, that he gave orders for the execution of many of the leading men of Judæa immediately upon his own death, that there might at least be some genuine mourning at his funeral; adding, as his last act, the death of yet another son, Antipater, to those of the two sons of Mariamne (so that Augustus was reported to have said that it was better to be "Herod's swine than son"), — it might well be that he gave such a command as this among the cruel and reckless acts of the last months of his life. — *Ellicott's New-Testament Commentary.* **The coasts thereof.** The borders, i.e., the country in the immediate vicinity. — *Abbott.* **Two years old and under.** So as to be sure to include the infant Jesus. **The time . . . of the wise men.** When they had seen the star, which was probably within a year; at least, not before the annunciation to Mary. "But cruelty overran the limits of space and time alike."

17. **Spoken by Jeremy.** Jeremiah, chap. 31: 15.

18. **Rama.** — A small town in the tribe of Benjamin, and six miles north of Jerusalem. It was the birth-place and burial-place of Samuel, and the spot where Saul was anointed king (1 Sam. 1: 19, 20; 2: 11; 8: 4; 19: 18; 25: 1). Not far distant from Ramah, yet south of Jerusalem and in the more immediate vicinity of Bethlehem, was the tomb of Rachel and the supposed place of her burial (Gen. 35: 18-20; 48: 7). The passage in Jeremiah refers originally to an event which occurred very soon after the prophecy was delivered. Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon; Zedekiah, the king of Judæa, was taken captive, all his sons were put to death before his face, his eyes were then put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon; the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and the chiefs of the city were carried away into captivity; and Jeremiah himself was taken in chains as far north as Ramah, the first station where the captives with their guards would

her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20. Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21. And he arose, and took the

young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of¹ Galilee:

23. And he came and dwelt in a city called² Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

¹ Chap. 3: 13. Luke 2: 39. ² Chap. 4: 13. Luke 1: 26. John 1: 45.

rendezvous, where he was released (Jer. 39; 40: 1-6. 2 Kings 5). It was in reference to this event that the prophecy in Jer. 31: 15 was uttered.—*Abbott*. The figure becomes a typical prophecy of the grief in Bethlehem. Rachel was the ancestress of the tribe of Benjamin, which was always identified in fortune with Judah. She well represents the mothers of Bethlehem, near to which she died in childbirth, and was buried. The sound of her lamentations is carried beyond Jerusalem, and heard at Ramah.—*Popular Commentary*. "Divine prophecies," says Lord Bacon, "being of the nature of their Author, with whom a thousand years are as one day, are not punctually fulfilled at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages;" and Dr. Wordsworth adds, "have, at length, their summer blossom and autumnal ripeness in Christ."

19. **When Herod was dead.** He died within a few weeks after this. See on ver. 15. **An angel.** See on ver. 13.

20. **Arise, &c.** The stay in Egypt is variously estimated. *Ellicott* thinks that not over a fortnight elapsed between the flight into Egypt and the death of Herod. *Greswell* allows seven months: other writers make it still longer.—*Abbott*. **For they are dead.** A general expression, or indefinite plural, perhaps quoted from Exod. 14: 19. It may include Herod and his wicked son Antipater, who was killed five days before his father.

21. **He arose.** Another instance of prompt and cheerful obedience. **The land of Israel.** A general term for the Holy Land,—Palestine.

22. **Archelaus.** On the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided between his three sons, Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip. To Archelaus fell Idumæa, Judæa, and Samaria. His proper title was ethnarch.—*Abbott*. **Reign in Judæa.** The term used in the first clause implies, in the original, that Archelaus was king, or reigned in kingly power. And it is objected, that this is not exactly correct, for that Archelaus never was king. The case is this: As soon as his father was dead, Archelaus delivered to the soldiers a letter from the deceased king, in which he thanked them for their fidelity and services, and requested them to continue faithful to his son Archelaus, who was to be his successor. Herod's will was at the same time publicly read, and *Archelaus was hailed as king*. This is surely sufficient authority for the statement. And although, in fact, Archelaus abstained from formally assuming the regal title, as it was necessary that the will of his father should be first confirmed by Augustus, and although eventually he only obtained from Rome the inferior title of ethnarch,—yet it appears from Josephus, that his own subjects did not trouble themselves with these reserves and limitations, but continued to style him "king" from the time they hailed him by that title.—*Kitto, Daily Bible Illustrations*. **Afraid to go thither.** The character of Archelaus was as cruel and treacherous as that of his father; and within a few months after his accession he sent in his horsemen to disperse a multitude, and slew not less than 3,000 men. Nine years later the oppression of Archelaus became so intolerable that both Jews and Samaritans complained of him to the Emperor, and he was deposed, and banished to Gaul.—*Ellicott*. **Into the parts of Galilee.** Galilee, the northern province of Palestine, was the best and safest place for bringing up the child Jesus. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, though not a good man, was a person of mild disposition as compared with Archelaus, with whom he was on terms so hostile, that there was not the least likelihood that he would, even if demanded, give up the infant Christ into his power. This is the Herod named throughout the Gospels (except in Matt. 2: 2).—*Kitto*. **Nazareth.** Nazareth is 20 miles east of the Mediterranean, and 16 miles west

of the Sea of Galilee; distant only two miles from Esdraelon.—*N. C. Burt.* 15 gently-rounded hills “seem as if they had met to form an enclosure” for this peaceful basin: they rise round it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion.—*A. P. Stanley.* From its very position, this unwall’d town seems to covet obscurity and seclusion.—*H. B. Tristram.* The modern Nazareth is one of the better class of Eastern villages, and has a population of three or four thousand. All the inhabitants of Galilee were looked on with contempt by their wealthier and more cultured neighbors of Judæa; but Nazareth suffered under special opprobrium.—*Abbott.* That it might be fulfilled. God so willed it, irrespective of Joseph’s design of settling there.—*Schaff.* Spoken by the prophets . . . Nazarene. The name *Nazarene* denoted *one exceedingly despised.* The reference is not to any particular passage, but to various predictions of the Messiah as the lowly and despised one. Isa. 49 : 7; 53 : 1-9.—*Binney.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Herod’s last days, see Josephus’ *Antiquities*, xvii. 6-8. On the whole lesson read Kitto’s “Daily Bible Illustrations,” pp. 122-156. See instructive sermon on “The Call out of Egypt,” in R. C. Trench’s *Westminster Sermons*. On the return to Bethlehem and Galilee, Wieseler, “Chronol. Synopsis,” pp. 30-37, Eng. tr. On the ministration of angels, Beecher’s “Life of Christ,” p. 39.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Herod’s death. It has been noticed that the loathsome disease of which Herod died is hardly mentioned in history, except in the case of men who have been rendered infamous by an atrocity of persecuting zeal. On his bed of intolerable anguish, in that splendid and luxurious palace which he had built for himself under the palms of Jericho; swollen with disease, and scorched by thirst; ulcerated externally, and glowing inwardly with a “soft, slow fire;” surrounded by plotting sons and plundering slaves, detesting all and detested by all; longing for death as a release from his tortures, yet dreading it as the beginning of worse terrors; stung by remorse, yet still unslaked with murder; a horror to all around him, yet in his guilty conscience a worse terror to himself; devoured by the premature corruption of an anticipated grave; eaten of worms as though visibly smitten by the finger of God’s wrath, after 70 years of successful villany,—the wretched old man, whom men had called the Great, lay in savage frenzy awaiting his last hour. The day of Herod’s death was, as he had foreseen, observed as a festival. His will was disputed; his kingdom disintegrated; his last order was disobeyed; his sons died for the most part in infamy and exile; the curse of God was on his house, and though, by ten wives and many concubines, he seems to have had nine sons and five daughters, yet within a hundred years the family of the *hierodoulos* of Ascalon had perished by disease or violence, and there was no living descendant to perpetuate his name.—*Farrar’s Life of Christ.*

II. A Cornish proverb says, “He that will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock.” This is the rock on which haughty and defiant guilt is wrecked. It is simply *left to itself*,—to become what it has chosen to be, such a demon of iniquity as to be abhorred of God and man. God save us from ourselves! We carry within us the elements of hell if we but choose to make them such. Ahaz, Judas, Nero, Borgia, Herod,—all were once prattling infants in happy mothers’ arms.—*Professor Phelps.*

III. Joseph following God’s guiding hand. “We were on shipboard,” said a captain’s wife, “lying in a Southern harbor. We were obliged, first, to make our way ashore. The waves were rolling heavily. I became frightened at the thought of attempting it, when one came to me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid: I will take care of you.’ He bore a peculiar-shaped dark lantern, only a single ray of light being emitted from a small circular aperture. ‘Now,’ he said, ‘take my hand: hold fast, do not fear. Do not look about you, or on either side of you, only on the little spot lighted by my lantern, and place your footsteps firmly *right there.*’ I heard the rushing of the waters, and was still conscious of fear; but by looking steadily only where the light fell, and planting my footsteps just there, not turning either to the right or the left, clasping firmly the strong hand, the danger was overcome, and the shore reached in safety. The next day my kind guide said, ‘Would you like to see the way by which you came last night?’ Then he showed me where our vessel had been lying, and the very narrow plank (just a single one) by which we had reached the shore. He knew, that, had I turned either to the right or left, I should in all probability have lost my balance, and gone over into those dark waters; but by ‘holding fast,’ and treading just where the light fell, all danger would be averted.”—*Sailor’s Magazine.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 13. God never ceases to take care of his children.

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own"

2. God saves us not *from* all trouble, but *in* trouble, making it work out good.
3. The best and safest place to be, is where God bids us dwell.
4. The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Heb. 1 : 14.
5. Ver. 15. Note the folly of fighting against God : sinful policy is always a failure.
6. Note, too, how useless was his sin. Jesus would never have taken Herod's throne.
7. The worldly life is like Egypt to the Israelites, — full of sin, idolatry, bondage, plagues, and death.
8. Out of this Egypt of sin God calls us all to come, and be the sons of God.
9. The religious life in Christ is as much better than the worldly, as the promised land flowing with milk and honey was better than slavery in Egypt.
10. Vers. 16-18. Even children gave up their lives for Christ, and they are with him in Paradise ; and note how Jesus loved little children.
11. The world cannot comfort us in the loss of children : Jesus can comfort us.
12. Ver. 22. Archelaus was like his father. The sins of the fathers were visited upon the children. No parent can sin without harming his family.
13. Jesus Christ exalts the humblest place, and heart, wherein he dwells.
14. Christ's retirement and humble training were the necessary conditions of his future exaltation.

LESSON III. — JANUARY 18, 1880.

JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN. — MATT. 3 : 1-17.

TIME. — The baptism of John was in the summer and autumn of A.D. 26 ; the baptism of Jesus, about the 1st of January, A.D. 27, nearly 30 years after the last lesson.

PLACES. — The preaching of John was in the wilderness of Judæa, extending along the western coast of the Dead Sea, and reaching as far north up the Jordan valley as Bethabara. The baptism of Jesus was doubtless at the fords of the Jordan, called Bethabara, five miles north-east of Jericho.

RULERS. Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome, 14th year. Pontius Pilate (second year) governor of Judæa. Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great, of our last lesson) governor of Galilee, 31st year. Herod Philip of Peræa and other parts (31st year).

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. — Rome still the ruler of the world. The Greek, the learned and almost universal language among the educated. Ovid and Livy died A.D. 18, nine years previous.

THE CONNECTION.

For 30 years Jesus lived in the retired village of Nazareth ; and very little is known of his history, except his visit to Jerusalem, and his discussion with the learned men in the temple, when he was 12 years old. But there are some things we may learn about this life at Nazareth, from his after-life. They are thus summed up by Farrar in his *Life of Christ* : (1) He was brought up in comparative poverty ; "not, indeed, an absorbing, degrading, grinding poverty, which is always rare, and almost always remediable, but that commonest lot of honest poverty, which, though it necessitates self-denial, can provide with ease for all the necessities of a simple life." (2) He was brought up not in idleness, but to honest labor. "Our Lord wished to show that labor is a pure and a noble thing : it is the salt of life ; it is the girdle of manliness ; it saves the body from effeminate languor, and the soul from polluting thoughts. And therefore Christ labored, working with his own hands, and fashioned ploughs and yokes for those who needed them." (3) His education was not neglected. "That he had not been to Jerusalem for purposes of instruction, and had not frequented any of the schools of the rabbis, is certain from the indignant questions of jealous enemies, 'From whence hath this man these things?' The education of a Jewish boy of the humbler classes was almost solely scriptural and moral ; and his parents were, as

1. ¹In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in ²the wilderness of Judæa,

2. And saying, ³Repent ye: for ⁴the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
3. For this is he that was spoken

¹ Mark 1: 3-8. Luke 3: 2-17. ² Josh. 15: 61. Judg. 1: 16. ³ Chap. 4: 17. ⁴ Chap. 10: 7; comp. Dan. 2: 44.

a rule, his sole teachers." But he had learned the ancient language of Hebrew, for he quotes it. He must also have known Greek, and Aramaic, the common language then spoken by the Jews. (4) "His best teaching was derived from immediate insight into his Father's will. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that it was in these silent, unrecorded years, that a great part of his work was done. In these years he 'began to do' long before he 'began to teach.' They were the years of a sinless childhood, a sinless boyhood, a sinless youth, a sinless manhood, spent in that humility, toil, obscurity, submission, contentment, prayer, to make them an eternal example to all our race."—*Farrar*. Meanwhile great political changes had taken place in Palestine. Archelaus had been banished, the semblance of kingly authority possessed by Herod the Great had been taken away, and Judæa was ruled directly by the Romans, through a governor or procurator, Pontius Pilate. Galilee continued under the rule of Herod Antipas; and all of Christ's life and ministry continued under the civil administration of these two men, Antipas in Galilee and Pontius Pilate in Judæa (Luke 3: 1).—*Abbott*. But now the time of his public ministry draws near. John the Baptist, his forerunner, has begun his preaching, and baptism of repentance, during the summer and autumn months; and Jesus begins his public teaching as the Messiah.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **In those days.** During the time that Jesus was living at Nazareth; more probably simply synonymous with "in that age or era."—*Abbott*. **John the Baptist.** He was the son of Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary, and was therefore a second cousin of Jesus. The circumstances of his birth are recorded in Luke 1. He was a Nazarite (for an account of the vows of a Nazarite, see Num. 6); had shut himself up to a solitary life of prayer and meditation (Luke 1: 80), from which he emerged to preach the doctrine of repentance as a preparation for the coming of the kingdom of God. A fuller account of his preaching is given in Luke 3: 4-18: it, however, changed in its nature after the baptism of Christ, from which time he preached not only repentance and good works as a fruit of repentance, but also faith in the Lamb of God that taketh away sin.—*Abbott*. **Preaching.** Proclaiming as a herald, announcing the King and the kingdom. **Wilderness of Judæa.** The word translated *wilderness* does not denote, as with us, a place of boundless forests, entirely destitute of inhabitants, but a mountainous, rough, and thinly settled country, covered to some considerable extent with forests and rocks, and better fitted for pasture than for tilling.—*Barnes*. St. Matthew is speaking generally of the wilderness country of the province of Judæa, without confining himself to that portion of it which lay within the old limits of the tribe of Judah. The country to the north of the wilderness of Judah proper, as far as Jericho, was also wilderness (Josh. 16: 1), and the banks of the lower Jordan were of the same character (Josephus, "B. J." iii. 10, 7, iv. 10, 4). The whole of this district may be fairly included in St. Matthew's expression; while St. Luke (iii. 3), who speaks of the Baptist as coming from the wilderness into the country about Jordan, probably referred to the wilderness of Judah proper.—*Cook*.

2. **Repent ye.** Not mere remorse, but conversion and reformation, or turning away from sin and unto God. The Greek word means change of mind, or heart. A necessary exhortation, because the people were corrupt, but especially now.—*Schaff*. Now, there be four parts of repentance (contrition, confession, faith, amendment of life), which, being set together, may be likened to an easy and short ladder whereby we may climb from the bottomless pit of perdition, into the castle or tower of eternal salvation.—*Homilies of the English Church*. **Kingdom of heaven.** The promised kingdom of the Messiah; a spiritual kingdom, including all who love and serve Jesus Christ as their King. It is of **heaven**, because Christ brought it from heaven, its King is in heaven, its laws and spirit are the same as those in heaven. It includes the beginning of the kingdom, its progress, and its final consummation in the millennium.—*P*. **Is at hand.** This kingdom was now to begin. The Messiah, its King, was come to inaugurate the new reign. That was begun which was prophesied in Dan. 2: 44; 7: 14.—*P*.

3. **For this is he.** Spoken by Matthew, not by John. **Esaias.** The Greek form of *Isaiah*; found in Isa. 40: 3, in the Septuagint, a Greek translation. **The voice.** The

of by the prophet Esaias, saying, ¹The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ²Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern

girdle about his loins; and his meat was ³locusts and ⁴wild honey.

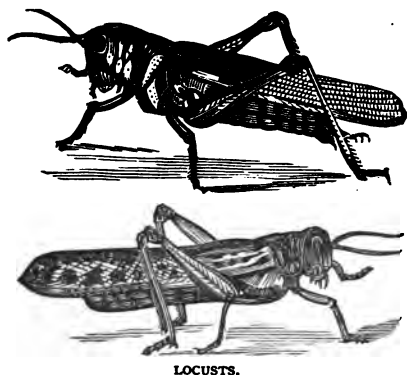
5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,

¹ Isa. 40: 3. John 1: 23. Luke 1: 76. ² 2 Kings 1: 8; comp. Zech. 13: 4. ³ Lev. 11: 22. ⁴ 1 Sam. 14: 25, 26.

whole man was a sermon: he might well call himself "a voice."—*Farrar*. The voice of one crying, &c. This passage is supposed to have a primary reference to the return of the Jews from captivity, and to be only secondarily fulfilled in the preaching of the Baptist. If this interpretation be admitted, it will only be another instance of the double sense of prophecy, similar to those in chap. 2: 15, 18. But in the present passage the spiritual signification so completely eclipses the temporal as to make it approach very nearly to a directly Messianic prophecy, like Isa. 7: 14 in relation to chap. 1: 23.—*Cook's Bible Commentary*. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. The imagery is drawn from the great strategical works of the conquerors of the East. They sent a herald before them to call the people of the countries through which they marched, to prepare for their approach. A "king's highway" had to be carried through the open land of the wilderness, valleys filled up, and hills levelled (the words used are, of course, poetical in their greatness), winding by-paths straightened, for the march of the great army. Interpreted in its spiritual application, the wilderness was the world lying in evil, and the making low the mountains and hills was the bringing down of spiritual pride. When the poor in spirit were received into the kingdom of heaven, the valleys were exalted; when soldier and publican renounced their special sins, the rough places were made plain and the crooked straight.—*Ellicott's New-Testament Commentary*.

4. Raiment of camel's hair. Not the elegant kind of cloth made of the fine hair of the camel, which is thence called camlet, but a coarse stuff manufactured from the long and shaggy hair (shed every year) of those animals.—*Dr. Campbell*. This raiment of camel's

hair was nothing else than that sackcloth of which we read so much in the Scriptures.—*Bp. Porteus*. A leathern girdle. Such as Elijah wore, of undressed hide.—*Schaff*. Meat. Food. Locusts. The common brown locust is about three inches in length, and the general form is that of a grasshopper.—*Dr. Harris*. Locusts have been used as food from the earliest times. Herodotus speaks of a Libyan nation who dried their locusts in the sun, and ate them with milk. The more common method, however, was to pull off the legs and wings, and roast them in an iron dish. Then they were thrown into a bag, and eaten like parched corn, each one taking a handful when he chose.—*Biblical Treasury*. Wild honey. Abundant in Palestine, which is described as "flowing with milk and honey." The term is, however, used by other ancient authors, of a kind of honey



which issued from fig-trees, palms, and other trees. A still more meagre diet.—*Schaff*. John's habits and dress were perfectly natural, as living among a people in the wilderness, thus contenting himself with the supplies that Providence spread around him.—*Biblical Treasury*. John's mode of life. The traveller who now wanders along the desolate shores of the Dead Sea, or roams over the bleak hills of Juttah, will see many a figure whose garb and mode of life must remind him of John. Time has not changed, and fashion never modifies the simple costume and manners of those children of the desert.—*J. L. Porter*.

5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, &c. Not merely persons from these localities, but such multitudes that it might be said that all Judæa was there: so we say now, on the occasion of a great procession, "All New York turned out to see it."—*Abbott*. A number of great highways, from Hebron, Jerusalem, Bethel, Samaria, and Galilee, converged on the

*I believe I came forth and desire to be baptized as
 sinners repenting of their sins / who's name is Jesus?
 of their sinfully - (I believe) if your repentance is sincere
 then show it by changing ^{your} life, do not suppose because
 you are descendants - of Abraham that you will therefore
 be saved -*

JANUARY 18.

LESSON III.

MATT. 3: 1-17.

6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7. But when he saw many of¹ the Pharisees and² Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them,³ O

generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from⁴ the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruits⁵ meet for repentance:

9. And think not to say within

¹ Chap. 23: 13-15. ² Chap. 22: 23. ³ Chaps. 12: 34; 23: 33. ⁴ 1 Thess. 1: 10. ⁵ Acts 26: 20.

plain of Jericho. Down these the people of those cities and regions would find easy access to the Baptist; and he whose mission it was to give the widest publicity to the Messiah's advent would doubtless take advantage of such facilities, and preach in the most accessible locality. — *J. L. Porter.*

6. In Jordan. The place (five miles north-east of Jericho) was known as Bethabara, "the house of the ford." Fords do not change in a river like the Jordan; roads are never altered in the East; and this must always have been, as it is now, the place of passage from Jericho to Gilead. Here probably the Israelites first crossed into Canaan. — *Tristram's Land of Israel.* **Confessing their sins.** The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works. — *Augustine.* **Cause of John's success.** 1. From the wonderful influence which men of thought exercise over men of action. The two are necessary to each other. 2. It was a ministry of terror. Fear has a peculiar fascination. You could not go among the dullest set, and preach graphically and terribly of hell-fire without insuring a large audience. 3. Men felt that he was *real*. Reality is the secret of all success. He spoke as men speak when they are in earnest. — *Robertson's Sermons, First Series.*

7. **Pharisees and Sadducees.** These two sects, according to Josephus, originated at the same period, under Jonathan the high priest (B.C. 159-144). The Pharisees took for their distinctive practice the strict observance of the law and all its requirements, written and oral. The religionism represented by the Sadducees was bare, literal, moral conformity, without any higher views or hopes. They thus escaped the dangers of tradition, but fell into deadness and worldliness, and a denial of spiritual influence. While our Lord was on earth, this state of mind was very prevalent among the educated classes throughout the Roman Empire, and most of the Jews of rank and station were Sadducees. — *Alford.* The Sadducees (whose name was derived from Zadok their supposed founder) were the infidels and materialists of the first century. — *Abbott.* **Come to his baptism.** Why did they come? (1) On account of the general excitement and interest; (2) from a secret consciousness that they were not right, and needed to have a better religion than they had; (3) from curiosity, to learn what was going on. **Generation of vipers.** Offspring, or brood, of vipers. The viper was a venomous serpent, here equivalent to "serpent." — The phrase characterizes them as both deceitful and malicious, and deadly poison to those whom they inoculated with their spirit. As a mere expression of abhorrence or contempt, this language would be unaccountable, if not unworthy of the man who used it. The only satisfactory solution is afforded by assuming an allusion to the first promise of a Saviour, Gen. 3: 15, in which the *seed of the woman*, i.e., Christ and his people, are contrasted with the *seed of the serpent*, or the Devil and his followers, as composing two antagonistic powers. The war of the ages is now approaching its crisis. — *Alexander.* **Who hath warned you?** What has made you come here? aroused your fears? made you see your danger? The wrath to come means the divine indignation, or the punishment that will come on the guilty. See 1 Thess. 1: 10. — *Barnes.* Foretold by Malachi (3: 2; 4: 5) in connection with the forerunner of the Messiah. — *Schaff.*

8. **Bring forth fruits.** Begin with their conduct and principles, in a way appropriate to repentance, and show in their lives the appropriate results of such a change. And, as fruit is the best evidence of the nature and quality of a tree, so they should thus best evince their sincerity. — *Jacobus.* **Meet for.** Adapted to, fitted for. **Repentance.** See on ver. 2. For a catalogue of the fruits of the new life, see Gal. 5: 22, 23; and 2 Pet. 1: 5-7. Observe, first, that John and Christ, as well as the apostles, call for something *more than fruits*, viz., a change of character (compare John 3: 3. 2 Cor. 5: 17); and, second, that they recognize as an evidence of a change of heart, not a creed, a ceremony, or a profession, but *fruits worthy of repentance.* Compare Matt. 7: 21-23. John 14: 21. — *Abbott.*

9. **Think not to say.** Not merely equivalent to "Say not," but, "Do not fancy you may say." — *Alford.* **Within yourselves.** In your hearts, in your feelings. **We have Abraham to (better, as) our father.** The boast seems to have been common, as in John

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

yourselves,¹ We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: ² therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11. ³ I indeed baptize you with water unto ⁴ repentance: but he that cometh ⁵ after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost,⁶ and *with* fire:

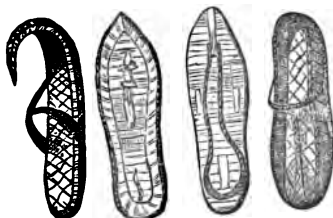
12. Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat⁷ into the garner; but

¹ John 8: 33, 39. ² Chap. 7: 19. ³ Mark 1: 8. Luke 3: 16. John 1: 26. ⁴ Acts 13: 24; 19: 4. ⁵ John 1: 15, 16, 27; 3: 30, 31. ⁶ John 1: 33. ⁷ Ch. 13: 30.

8: 33-39, and was connected with the belief that this alone would be enough to insure for every Jew an admission into paradise.—*Professor Plumptre*. Of these stones. The pebbles or shingle on the beach of the Jordan. Out of the unlearned and despised fishermen of Galilee he raised up his apostles (John 7: 48). Out of the hated and outcast Gentiles he built up the new church, the “new Jerusalem.” The head of the corner was itself a “stone which the builders despised” (Matt. 21: 42).—*Abbott*.

10. And now. The present tenses imply the law or habit which now and henceforward in the kingdom of heaven prevails: “from this time it is so.”—*Alford*. Unto the root. The axe laid unto the root denotes that every thing is ready now for cutting down such as are heartless and fruitless. That the trial shall be of the heart and life. Men cannot hope any longer to stand upon a mere profession, or external relation. Now the rule is, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Men must give substantial and actual evidence of their being Christians, or they will be cut down.—*Jacobus*. Good fruit. The beatitudes (Matt. 5: 3-10), and the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22, 23). Cast into the fire. The reference is still to Malachi’s prophecy (4: 1),—utterly and terribly destroyed.

11. I indeed. The Baptist acknowledges that he is a mere forerunner, to prepare the way for the Messiah. Water is contrasted with the Holy Spirit, and repentance with “fire.” He that cometh after me. The one soon to appear, before whom I go as a forerunner or herald. Mightier. Having greater power, as shown in his works in this verse. Whose shoes. Sandals,—simply a sole fastened to the foot by thongs or straps. As stockings were not worn, the feet would become soiled; and, when persons entered a house, the sandals were taken off and laid aside, so that the feet might be washed. This was the office of the lowest servants. John, then, by saying, *I am not worthy to bear* [to carry away] *his sandals*, conveyed this idea: “I am not worthy to be the most menial servant to so distinguished a personage as the Messiah.”—*Ripley*. With the Holy Ghost. “Ghost,” when the Bible was translated,



SANDALS.

was the common name for “spirit.” As on the day of Pentecost, visibly (Acts 2: 1-4); but also often in the history of the Church (revivals) and individuals. With fire. Jerome says there is a threefold baptism of fire: (1) The fire of the Holy Spirit, because it makes the recipient fervent,—burning in spirit; (2) the fire of earthly trials; (3) the fire which shall at last try every man’s work (1 Cor. 3: 13). But Abbott’s view is far better: “While John could only bid them repent, and symbolize their purification by the washing of water, Jesus would really purify them, and give them a new heart by the Holy Spirit, and the *fire of divine life and love*.”—*Abbott*.

12. Whose fan is in his hand. Fan; winnowing fan, or shovel, by which the grain, mingled with chaff, was exposed to the wind, so that the chaff was blown away.—*Ripley*. Very little use is now made of the fan, but I have seen it employed to purge the floor of the refuse dust which the owner throws away as useless.—*Thomson’s Land and Book*. Here we have another figure of judgment. The fan in his hand, or the instrument for the separating or purging, is the word, or the preaching of the gospel.—*Lange*. His fan is in his hand; the sifting process is going on now; the gospel is measuring men.—*Abbott*. Purge. Cleanse. His floor; i. e., the contents of the barn-floor. Or perhaps, owing to the verb (*shall cleanse from one end to the other*), the floor itself, which was an open, hard-

13. *Jesus* ^{as a parent} among the last who offered themselves *Luke 3: 21.*

JANUARY 18.

LESSON III.

MATT. 3: 1-17.

he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.¹

13. ² Then cometh Jesus from Galilee

to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14. But John forbade him, saying, I

¹ Mark 9: 43, 48. ² Mark 1: 9. Luke 3: 21. ³ Ch. 2: 22.

trodden space in the middle of the field. — *Alford.* **Wheat.** True and penitent believers, the precious, pure produce of God's husbandry. **The garner.** The granary, usually dry,

subterranean vaults, — an emblem, first, of the kingdom of heaven on earth; and, secondly, of the heavenly inheritance. — *Lange.*

Chaff. All that is not wheat, including the straw, which was commonly used in the East for fuel. — *Abbott.*

Here it means the whole refuse of God's husbandry, — those who will not be converted, and changed into good wheat. **Unquenchable fire.** There was danger lest, after they had been separated, the chaff should be blown again among the wheat by the changing of the wind. To prevent this they put fire to it at the windward side, which crept on, and never gave over till it had consumed all the chaff. In this sense it was unquenchable fire. See Isa. 5: 24. — *Burder.* Fire that will not be put out, but which will make an utter destruction. — *Ripley.* The chaff are the ungodly and evil-doers. The unquenched fire is the wrath of God against evil, which is, in its very nature, eternal, and can only cease with the cessation or transformation of the evil. — *Ellicott.*

13. **Then cometh Jesus.** Why should our Lord, who was *without sin*, come to a baptism of repentance? Because "he was made sin for us." It became him, being in the likeness of sinful flesh, to go through those appointed rites and purifications which belong to the flesh. There is no more strangeness in his having been baptized by John than in his keeping the passover. The one rite, as the other, belonged to *sinners*. — *Alford.* **From Galilee.** His home at Nazareth, where he had spent the previous thirty years of his life. **To Jordan.** Bethabara, the fords of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

14. **John forbade him.** Tried to hinder him; the active, earnest preventing with the gesture, or hand, or voice. — *Alford.* **I have need to be baptized of thee.** With the Holy Spirit and fire (ver. 11).

15. **Suffer. Permit. Becometh us.** Not, I *must* be baptized, as the others must; but, it is fitting and proper. **Us.** Not merely me, but *you and me*. **To fulfil all righteousness.** *You*, by yielding to the will of your Lord, even in a matter the propriety of which you do not understand (John 13: 7); *me*, by taking my place under the law, and acting as one made in the image of sin, though I know no sin. — *Abbott.*

16. **And lo.** This occurred while he prayed (Luke 3: 21), in answer to prayer. Even to Jesus the best gifts came through prayer. **The heavens were opened.** An apparent separation or division of the visible expanse, as if to afford passage to the form and voice which are mentioned in the next clause. Compare similar expressions (Isa. 64: 1. Ezek. 1: 1. John 1: 52. Acts 7: 56.) In all these cases the essential idea suggested by the version is that of renewed communication and extraordinary gifts from heaven to earth. — *Alexander.*

The Spirit descending like a dove. In bodily shape like a dove, says Luke (3: 22). The appearance and voice seem to have been manifested to our Lord and the Baptist only. They may have been *alone* at the time. The Holy Spirit descended not only in the *manner* of a dove, but in bodily shape, which I cannot understand in any but the literal sense, as the *bodily shape of a dove*, seen by the Baptist. — *Alford.* The dove was historically con-



WINNOWING FAN.

John knew him not 27 Jan 1831

5- Jesus - forms to his final mission of suffering and death, - His final mission he was to make an end of sin, and bring in our lasting righteous new day. 9: 24 - that we might be made the righteous men of God in him. 2 Cor. 5: 121 -
 (MATT. 3: 1-17. LESSON III. 2 Cor. 5: 121 - FIRST QUARTER.

have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the

water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God¹ descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17. And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved² Son, in whom I am well pleased.

¹ Isa. 11: 2; 42: 1; 61: 1. John 3: 34. ² Ps. 2: 7. Luke 9: 35. Eph. 1: 6. ² Pet. 1: 17.

nected in the Jewish mind with the abatement of the waters after the flood, and has become, as well as the olive-branch, a symbol of peace among all Christian people; and it is referred to by Christ as a symbol of harmlessness and gentleness. It was thus a fitting emblematic form for the Holy Spirit to take on in giving a divine indorsement to Him who is a sacrifice for all, whose coming brings life to the world and the assurance of the peace of God to the soul which accepts him, and who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. — *Abbott.*



THRESHING-FLOOR.

17. A voice from heaven. As true a voice, with as true an articulation, as ever came from human or superhuman organs of utterance. It was no dream or conception of John's, but a reality to his perception. — *Whedon.* Thou art my beloved Son. Christians are called "sons of God" (1 John 3: 2); but nowhere is the term "beloved son" applied by God to any one but Jesus

Christ, to whom it is given, both here and in the hour of his transfiguration (Matt. 17: 5). — *Abbott.* These solemn words are a divine declaration that our Lord Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer whom God from the beginning undertook to send into the world, and that with his incarnation, sacrifice, and substitution for man, God the Father is satisfied and well pleased. — *Ryle.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On locusts and wild honey, see "The Land and the Book," vol. ii. pp. 102-108; and Van Lennep's "Bible Lands," pp. 312-320. On Abraham to our father, see Professor Phelps's "Studies in the Old Testament," three chapters, pp. 101-136; and chapter on "The Twin Serpents," pp. 137-146, on the evil of sin (full of illustrations).

Robertson's sermon, first series, on "The Scribes and Pharisees at the baptism of John." For children of Abraham from stony hearts, see Guthrie's "Gospel in Ezekiel," 247-263, "The Heart of Stone."

Maclaren's Sermons, second series, on "The Baptism of Fire."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Ver. 8. Bring forth fruits. It is said that a certain clergyman's wife, after a religious meeting, was accustomed to ask, "Is it all done?" The husband replied, "It is all said: now we must go and do it."

The wife's question, which is, 'immunity had come to the way to reality, say, which is the reality of the new life, the new life, the new life - for the...

could not be the Lord our righteous one - The head
 a new race and the source of righteousness for all mankind
 except by first suffering the death due to the nation he
 had assumed thereby delivering it from all its exposure
 and perfecting it forever

JANUARY 18.

LESSON III.

MATT. 3: 1-17.

II. Ver. 9. **Abraham's children.** A young man told a minister, who visited him shortly before death, that he thought he should be saved *because his mother was such a good woman!* — *Biblical Museum.* "The man who has nothing to boast of but his ancestors is like a potato: the only good belonging to him is underground." — *Sir T. Overbury.*

III. **Unquenchable fire** (ver. 12). In one of Hawthorne's thrillingly fearful pictures, he represents a wretched man going about with a serpent in his bosom. Every now and then he clutches at his breast with his fingers, crying, "It gnaws me! It gnaws me!" He thinks he finds that every man he meets is cursed with the same snake-guest. "It gnaws me," is the universal confession. No flagrant crimes are necessary to reduce a man to this condition of inward and conscious curse. A man has only to abandon God, and live to himself, and he is as sure of it as Judas. — *Professor Phelps, Studies in O. T.*, p. 108.

IV. The bad angel, leading, opened gate after gate; and, at each gate, the road became rougher and the sky more lurid. The peculiarity was that the gates swung in to let the twain pass, but clanged shut with a jar that indicated they could never open to let them out. The fountains that tossed at the start with wines now poured forth bubbling tears and foaming blood. And there was a great serpent on the right side of the road; and the man asked the bad angel, "What is that serpent?" And the answer was, "That is the serpent of stinging remorse." And there was a lion on the left side the road; and the man asked, "What is that lion?" And the answer was, "That is all-devouring despair." And a vulture flew overhead; and the man asked, "What is that vulture?" And the answer was, "That is the vulture waiting for the carcasses of the slain." And the man began to pull off from his body the folds of something that had wound him round and round, and asked, "What is that that twists me in its awful convulsion?" And the answer was, "This is the worm that never dies." Then the last deception fell off the charmer; and it said, "I was sent forth from the pit to destroy your soul. I watched my chance for many a year. The night you hesitated, I gained my triumph. You are here. Aha! aha! Let me fill high these two chalices of fire, while we together drink to Darkness and Woe and Death!" — *Talmage's Sermons.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. Truth and earnestness will draw people to hear, — even into a wilderness.
2. Ver. 2. Of all acts is not, for a man, *repentance* the most divine? The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none. — *Carlyle.*
3. True repentance flows from a sight of Christ, — from a sense of his love. — *Henry.*
4. Ver. 3. We should all prepare the way of the Lord. (1) Fill up the valleys, the sins of omission, — defects of prayer, of faith, of love, of work. (2) Bring down the mountains of pride, sin, selfishness, unbelief, worldliness. (3) Straighten out all crooked places, crooked dealings with others, crooked ways of sin, settle difficulties, confess sins. (4) Smooth the rough places, the harshness of temper and manner, the little foxes that spoil the vines, the want of courtesy which mars the beauty of holiness.
5. Ver. 6. No remission of sin, without confession of sin.
6. Ver. 7. No going to church and sabbath school will save us, unless we come to Christ.
7. Ver. 8. The only proof that we have repented of sin is to bear the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5: 22, 23.
8. Ver. 9. Men's hearts are like stone, hard, cold, and dead; and yet God is able to make them his children.
9. If those who can and ought to do Christ's work will not do it, God will raise up instruments and means from unexpected places.
10. Ver. 10. Punishment is sure to come for sin, as terrible as fire. All wise men are afraid of sin.
11. Ver. 11. Teachers should hide behind the cross, and lead their scholars straight to Jesus.
12. We need a baptism of fire, — God's power and love that will consume our sins, make our hearts warm and burning with love, and with that peculiar power which comes only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
13. Ver. 12. The good and the bad are to be separated hereafter; but that separation is begun here, and is growing more and more marked.
14. Nothing can hinder the consuming punishment of sin, so long as sin remains in the heart.
15. Ver. 13. The true follower of Christ must follow him in this public renunciation of sin, and profession of religion. It is not true, as sometimes said, that Christ professed religion only by his life. — *Abbott.*
16. Ver. 16. It is as he prays, that the Spirit comes. He stands before us here, a type

16
 as prophet price of King
 the public renouncing
 the Spirit comes
 the public renouncing
 the Spirit comes

and baptism in Jordan, was a sign of his
 to their death
 righteousness
 all this

and pattern of every true believer in the Lord, as to the duty, the privilege, the power, of prayer. — *William Hanna, Life of Christ.*

17. The heavens above are not shut against us: the Spirit who descended like a dove has not taken wings, and flown away from this earth. There is a power by which these heavens can still be penetrated, — the power that lies in simple, humble, earnest, continued, believing prayer. — *Hanna.*

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS. — MATT. 4: 1-11.

TIME. — About January, of A.D. 27. Very soon after his baptism, as in the last Lesson.

PLACE. — The northern part of the wilderness of Judæa, between Jerusalem and Jericho on the west, and the Jordan and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount *Quarantania*, near the Jordan, so named because Jesus passed 40 days fasting in one of its caves.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar emperor of Rome (14th year); Pontius Pilate governor of Judæa (second year); Herod Antipas of Galilee (31st year).

INTRODUCTION.

I. The source from which Matthew derived his knowledge of the temptation. It had its source in our Lord's own report of what he had passed through. We have here that which originated in some communication from our Lord's own lips to one of his disciples, his own record of the experience of those 40 days. So taken, it will be seen that all is coherent, and in some sense (marvellous as the whole is) natural, throwing light on our Lord's past life, explaining much that followed in his teaching. — *Ellicott.*

II. How could Christ, a perfectly holy being, be tempted? In every act of sin there are two distinct steps. (1) There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural, is not wrong. (2) There is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, and that is sin. Sin is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will. There were in Christ all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to him, so were sunlight and life. Hunger, pain, death, he could feel them all, and shrunk from them. He suffered, being tempted, from the force of desire. But there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. Remember this; for the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Christ destroys the reality of temptation, and converts the whole of his history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were represented, not felt. — *F. W. Robertson.*

III. It was a real temptation, as real as ours. That Christ's innocence was secure by even more than divine help, by the possession of a divine nature, is a mere inference of the reason, and involves disbelief in the simple record of the gospel. Why was he tempted by a sagacious tempter if he could not by any possibility be led into evil? And, if he himself knew that he could not sin, what could the transaction have been to him but a mere formality? Or how is he an example to us, if his temptation is an unreality? No! They dishonor Christ's work who think thus. When he took on him the form of a servant he became by his own will subject to every thing which can affect human nature. — *President Theo. D. Woolsey.*

IV. The reasons for the temptation. 1. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2: 18). The three temptations are the same three great classes of temptations to which all men are now exposed. To help us, it was necessary, not only that he should be tempted, but should stand the temptation. 2. The temptations were intended, not for Jesus (merely) in his nature as a man, but for Jesus in his official station as the Messiah. God was putting it to the test whether Jesus was qualified for his office, — whether he would remain true to the spiritual idea of the Messiah, or would fall below it under temptation. Nor was the tempter in this case anxious simply to lead a good man into sin, but he was striking at the root of salvation: his aim was to undermine the principles of the kingdom of heaven, to lead the Christ, if possible, by some subtle way of conduct inconsistent with the office to which he had been chosen, and which he had freely accepted. This thought is the key to the story of the temptation. — *President Theo. D. Woolsey.*

V. The manner of the temptations. There is only one way of understanding it as

JANUARY 25.

MATT. 4: I-11.

2. And when he had fasted² forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

a whole: viz., as the history of a real occurrence, of an actual temptation of our Lord by the Devil as a person. — *Cook*. So nearly all agree, but differ as to the form of the reality. The temptations *must* have come from *without*, and not from the mind of Jesus, if he was sinless. Either (1) it is a literal narrative, — that Satan really appeared in tangible form to Jesus, and proposed to him to convert the stones into bread, carried him bodily to the pinnacle of the temple, and showed him from some high eminence a view which at least suggested all the kingdoms of the world. This is a common view among evangelical interpreters: to it there are serious objections, objections which seem to me to be conclusive. Or (2) it describes in dramatic language a real but internal experience, — that Satan was really present, whispering the suggestions of evil to the soul of Jesus, as he still does to us, but unrecognized until the last, the subtlest and worst of the three temptations; that the narrative describes a succession of pictures which passed before Christ's imagination, by which Satan endeavored to seduce him; that it was in imagination that Jesus was carried to the pinnacle of the temple, and in imagination was shown the kingdoms of the world, and that he was invited to gain control of them, not by a literal worshipping of the bodily fiend, but by yielding to the arts of the Evil One, and serving him as the previous conquerors of the world, Cyrus and Alexander for example, had done. This opinion is also beset with difficulties. Difficulties, however, are *inherent in any conception of Christ's temptation here, and in any attempt to understand his experiences of conflict elsewhere recorded*. We can only reverently accept the declaration that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Fully recognizing this, I adopt the last of the interpretations given above, as, on the whole, the one most consonant with other Scripture, the narrative itself, and with reason. — *Lyman Abbott*. *It is better to unite the two. The narrative does not say that Satan came undisguised, as Satan. He doubtless appeared in some form "as an angel of light;" but Satan literally came, and he may have used the imagination of Christ, as well as his literal vision.* — *P.*

1. Then. Immediately after his baptism by John, so says Mark 1: 12. **Was led up.** He did not seek, or run heedlessly into, temptation: he only went where the impulse of the Spirit led him. **Up.** From the low banks of Jordan into the mountains of the wilderness. **Of (by) the Spirit.** That blessed Spirit immediately before spoken of as descending upon him at his baptism, and abiding upon him. Luke, connecting these two scenes, as if the one were but the sequel of the other, says, "Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led," &c. Mark's expression has a startling sharpness about it. "Immediately the Spirit driveth him," "putteth," or "hurrieth him forth," or "impelleth him." (See the same word in Mark 1: 3; 5: 40. Matt. 9: 25; 13: 52. John 10: 4.) The thought thus strongly expressed is the mighty constraining impulse of the Spirit under which he went; while Matthew's more gentle expression, "was led up," intimates how purely voluntary on his own part this action was. — **F. F. and B. The wilderness.** The scene of Christ's temptation has been identified by the voice of tradition in the Greek and Latin churches as that wild and lonely region between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, called in modern geography Quarantania. It is an extensive plateau, elevated to a considerable height above the plain of Jericho and the west bank of the Jordan; and hence the literal accuracy of the expression, that Jesus was "led up" into the wilderness. Travellers have described it as a barren sterile waste of painful whiteness, shut in on the west by a ridge of gray limestone hills, moulded into every conceivable shape; while on the east the view is closed by the gigantic wall of the Moab mountains. — **Biblical Treasury.** **To be tempted.** To tempt is literally to stretch out, or try the strength of. Old French, *tempter*; French, *tenter*; Latin, *tento, tempto*, an intensive of *tendo*, to stretch. — **Biblical Museum.** He was led by the Spirit to be proved, tried, to see if he were able to be the Messiah. Satan's temptations, or enticements to sin, were the means by which he was tempted in the higher sense, i.e., *proved*. **Of (by) the Devil.** Devil means *slanderer, or accuser*. A.-Saxon, *deabol, diabol*; Latin, *diabolus*; Greek, *diabolus*, fr. *diaballō*, to slander, — *dia*, down, and *ballō*, to throw. Here the existence and personality of Satan are placed before us in the most distinct language. It would be the boldest of all paradoxes to assert that the Scriptures do

And is tempting you 31 All the more
is tempted above the temptations of the world
the temptation also of the flesh 10 & of the devil
that ye may be overcomen

3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written,¹ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

¹ Deut. 8: 3.

not teach the existence of an evil power whom they call the Enemy, the Accuser, the Devil. — *Ellicott*. The doctrine of the Devil, as revealed in the word of God, is, that he is a created being of a higher order than man, who has fallen away from God (Jude 6); that he is related to sin as its primeval and seductive originator (John 3: 8; 8: 44); that he is an adversary, accuser, and a tempter of God's people (Gen. 3; compare Rev. 12: 9. Matt. 13: 39); that he stands in relation to the Redeemer as a conquered enemy (John 12: 31. Rev. 12: 9), and in relation to the redeemed as an enemy absolutely vincible (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9. Jas. 4: 7); that he nevertheless continues to rage and persecute on earth (Rev. 2: 10; 3: 9). — *G. Butler's Bible-Reader's Commentary*. It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal Devil, than in bad men, bad leaders on earth. To deny the fact of the Devil, is to lay much heavier charges of evil on the nature of man than does the belief in Satan. —

FIRST STAGE OF THE TEMPTATION. — *The forty days*. Both Mark and Luke say that he was tempted all these 40 days. Probably in the same general way as the three great assaults at last. Those three were the sum and crowning conflict of all. — *P*.

2. Fasted forty days. Of the like long fasting, we have antecedent examples in the cases of Moses and of Elijah; and these cases, like this, were doubtless miraculous. — *Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations*. The object of this, as of all fasting, was absorption in spiritual exercises, escaping as much as might be from the bonds of the flesh. He was afterward an hungered. The words imply a partial return to the common life of sensation. The cravings of the body at last made themselves felt. — *Ellicott*.

SECOND STAGE. — *The three crowning temptations*. In each of these three, it is necessary for their perfect understanding, that we clearly see four things: (1) What was the allure-ment, the intense desirableness to Jesus: without this there is no temptation. (2) What there was wrong in the act proposed. (3) The means of the victory. (4) How it is a type of our temptations. — *P*.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION. Vers. 3, 4. *Temptations of the flesh*.

3. The tempter came. In what form it is not said; but it is certain that it was not in any hideous form as Satan is represented most, or as Apollyon in Bunyan's Pilgrim. He never so appears in Scripture. If he had appeared to Christ as Satan, there would have been no temptation whatever, but only repulsion. Neither does Satan now so tempt men. He always comes in a garb of light, of beauty, of attraction; the foam of the wine-cup, not the dregs; on a golden throne, in a gilded palace, forever hiding his true nature. Only so could he tempt at all. — *P*. To him. Satan made his severest assault in the time of Jesus' greatest weakness. — He still watches his time, attacks when weary, heavy, sick, troubled. If thou be the Son of God. Since thou art. There is no doubt expressed. — *Alford*. Thinking to beguile him with his flattery. — *Chrysostom*. Stones be made bread. To answer the double purpose of satisfying his hunger, and proving that he is the Son of God, having all power. (John 3: 34, 35.) — *Binney*. The stones may have been round, resembling loaves. (1) What was the ALLUREMENT? Intense hunger, a natural and perfectly right and pure desire; and he had the power by one word, or act of will, to satisfy it. (2) What was THE WRONG in doing what was suggested? It was wrong because he had taken upon himself the nature of man, and the conditions and sufferings of mankind. To have availed himself of his divine power to escape the bodily discomforts of humanity, would have been to fail in his mission of becoming our pattern, and our sympathizing High Priest, at the very outset. Accordingly there is no case in the New Testament in which Christ exercises miraculous power for his own benefit. — *Abbott*. (3) THE MEANS OF VICTORY. *The promises in the word of God* (ver. 4).

4. It is written. In Deut. 8: 3; quoted from the Septuagint, or Greek translation. Not by bread alone. Not by the ordinary and visible food alone, but by every word; i.e., whatever God may command of promise. God will provide food in some way. But more than this: it is better to starve than to do wrong; better to suffer than break God's word of command; better die than distrust God. But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Of all passages in Old Testament Scripture, none could have been pitched upon more apposite, perhaps not one so apposite, to our Lord's purpose. "The Lord led thee [said Moses to Israel, at the close of their journeyings] these forty

5. ¹Then the devil taketh him up into ²the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ³He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up,

¹ Luke 4: 9-12. ² Chap. 27: 53. Neh. 11: 1, 18. ³ Ps. 91: 11, 12.

years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only," &c. "Now, if Israel spent, not forty days, but forty years, in a waste, howling wilderness, where there were no means of human subsistence, not starving, but divinely provided for, on purpose to prove to every age that human support depends not upon bread, but upon God's unfailing word of promise and pledge of all needful providential care,—am I, distrusting this word of God, and despairing of relief, to take the law into my own hand? True, the Son of God is able enough to turn stones into bread; but what the Son of God is able to do is not the present question, but, what is *man's duty* under want of the necessities of life. And, as Israel's condition in the wilderness did not justify their unbelieving murmurings and frequent desperation, so neither would mine warrant the exercise of the power of the Son of God in snatching despairingly at unwarranted relief. As man, therefore, I will await divine supply, nothing doubting that at the fitting time it will arrive. — *J. F. and B.* (4) *It was a TYPE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS*,—to gratify the desires of the flesh in unlawful ways,—to gain our Garden of Eden by eating of the forbidden fruit,—to run courses of dissipation and revelry because they seem the happiest, and distrust God's word that to do right is always wise and best. Satan hides the evils from our eyes, and shows only the pleasure: he points at the rainbow, but veils the storm behind it, and thus only are we really tempted. And we gain the victory as Christ gained it. God's words, God's joys, God's peace, God's life in the soul, will enable us to triumph. — *P.*

THE SECOND TEMPTATION, vers. 5-7. *To gain good ends in bad ways.*

5. **The Devil taketh him up.** Either literally, or in thought, in planning for his future life. If Satan did appear in bodily shape, his suggestions could become temptations only as they might act upon the mind of Jesus. Hence the better view of the temptation is that which regards it as a mental scene. — *J. P. Thompson.* As to the being taken up into the holy city, and into an exceeding high mountain, it may have been in thought, without doing any violence to the terms employed. — *Professor R. D. Hitchcock.* **The holy city.** Jerusalem. **Pinnacle of the temple.** The temple was built on Mount Moriah, on a foundation built up of solid masonry, so as to present a nearly perpendicular wall of over 200 feet from the floor of the temple to the valley below, "almost equal in height to the tallest of our church-spires." On this wall, overhanging the valley of the Kedron, was Herod's royal portico. From the roof of that portico to the valley below was not less than 300 feet. "The valley was very deep, insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth." — *Josephus.* According to Alford, it was the roof of this porch which is intended by the description here. According to others, it was the apex of the temple proper, from which he was called upon to cast himself down into the court below among the people who were always assembled there. The essence of the temptation appears to me to be its publicity; and therefore, whatever point of the temple was brought to Christ's mind, it must have been one from which the miracle proposed could have been generally observed. — *Abbott.*

6. **Cast thyself down.** In the presence of a wondering, admiring crowd, who would hail you then as the king of the Jews. For it is written. In Ps. 91: 11. This is quoted to show that he would be safe in doing what was proposed. He could gain his end and yet escape danger. (1) *What was the ALLUREMENT in this temptation? To be the Messiah without suffering and death; such a Messiah as carnal Judaism then longed for.* The whole appeal of Satan was: Put forth your power in self-seeking and self-assertion, carry the Jewish nation by storm, and so begin at once the conquest of the world. — *Professor R. D. Hitchcock.* And, more, it would seem to hasten their reception of the Messiah; it would bring sooner the triumph of the truth; God's kingdom would burst upon the whole earth in sudden and unspeakable glory. No long delays, no ages of slowly transforming the nations, if only he would come to the Jews in the form of a great prophet descending from heaven, and be their visible king, reigning in worldly splendor. It was no

lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, ¹Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8. ²Again, the devil taketh him up

into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹ Deut. 6: 16. ² Luke 4: 5-8.

more desire to escape from pain. The temptation appealed to his higher nature. — *P.* 2. *What was the SIN in obeying the suggestion?* It was a false and unwarranted use of the promises of God. It was disobeying the whole Scriptures, defining what the Messiah should do. It was defying God's way for the coming of his kingdom. It would have destroyed the whole value and power of his salvation, gaining him subjects, not children, outward homage, and not new hearts. It would have rendered impossible the true and blessed kingdom of heaven, in a morally transformed world. — *P.* (3) *The means of VICTORY.* Christ dissolved the imagined glory of the temptation, by a simple, straightforward command of duty. A wrong, tempting God, stands at the very threshold of Satan's plan: therefore Christ cannot go that way. — *P.*

7. *It is written* (Deut. 6: 16). *Again*, — in another place. *Shalt not tempt the Lord.* That is, thou shalt not *try* him; or, thou shalt not, by throwing thyself into voluntary and uncommanded dangers, appeal to God for protection, or trifle with the promises made to those who are thrown into danger *by his providence*. — *Barnes.* (4) *This was a TYPE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS*, when we try to gain the blessings of religion and heaven in other ways than God has appointed, — by good works instead of Christ, by forms instead of faith. And when we would build up the Church, or Sunday school, by pandering to fashion, or wealth, instead of spiritual life. — *P.* We share the second experience when we are tempted to neglect duties which God's providence lays upon us, or to run into needless dangers or difficulties, or to assume uncalled-for hazards, and trust the result to God, or to make an ostentatious display of our faith in God: we resist the second when, in humble trust in Him, we do all that God has given us power to do, looking to him only to protect us from ills against which we cannot, by reasonable precaution, guard ourselves, and patiently waiting for him to bring about his own results in his own time and way. — *Abbott.*

THE THIRD TEMPTATION, vers. 8-10. *To gain wealth, power, and success, by sinful practices.*

8. *All the kingdoms of the world, &c.* It is not necessary to inquire whether this expression is to be understood as literal or as hyperbolic. In either case the vision must be regarded as supernatural, and as embracing far more than the ordinary prospect of a wide landscape from a high mountain. The supernatural character is still more clearly marked by the language of St. Luke, "in a moment of time." — *H. D. Mansell.* With a vivid representation of their wealth and power, and *in a moment of time*, as if to take him by surprise. — *Binney.* (1) *What was THE ALLUREMENT in the third temptation?* It is found in ver. 9. — *All these will I give thee.* I will relinquish my hold and my right, and let you have the whole world as the Messiah monarch. All nations will then be subject to you as the king of the Jews. I will lead them to help you, not hinder, as they otherwise will do. The kingdom of God will come at once, without pain or the cross, without humility and reproach, but with glory and power. — *P.* St. Luke's addition, "For that is (has been) delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it," is full of significance. The offer made by the Tempter rested on the apparent evidence of the world's history. The rulers of the world, its Herods and its Cæsars, seemed to have attained their eminence by trampling the laws of God under foot, and accepting Evil as the Lord and Master of the world. — *Ellicott.* (2) *What was the SIN?* It is found in the last clause, — *If thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Not a bald act of falling in outward worship of the grim king of darkness; but such an act of worship, as when men worship money, by loving it better than God; as they worship success, by placing it before duty; a *real*, not a formal, worship. Satan is too wise to insist on the *form* if he can gain the *heart*: the form will then soon come. Christ was to give up his spiritual kingdom for a temporal; his converting the world, for a ruling of the world, — a real act of worship of Satan, practically acknowledging him as supreme, and really leaving all souls unconverted, and therefore under the dominion of Satan. — *P.* (3) *How did he gain the VICTORY?* He saw that it was Satan tempting, and he chose *God*.

angels came" at the time of the temptation of Christ, or
comes from the tradition that the angels of that time were

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence,¹ Satan: for it is written,² Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold,³ angels came and ministered unto him.

¹ 1 Chron. 21: 1. Job 1: 6. ² Deut. 6: 13; 10: 20. ³ Chap. 26: 55. Luke 22: 43.

10. **Get thee hence, Satan.** It was here that Satan revealed himself. To give up dying for the sins of the world, to give up converting the world, and let Satan *really* rule, — this could come only from *Satan*, the great *adversary* of all good. Here the robes of light fell off, and Satan was undisguised. — *P.* It is written. A modified quotation of Deut. 6: 13. **Thou shalt worship the Lord.** God really rules the world; and there is no lasting good, nothing truly happy, nothing successful, no kingdom gained, except by making God first and chief, — a *real worship* of God as supreme. — *P.* (4) *The third temptation as a TYPE of ours.* We share the third experience when we are tempted, for the sake of power, wealth, or influence, to conform to the world, and to employ Satan's instruments in even seeming to do God's service. We yield to the third when we are conformed to this world, and adopt its policies and methods, and imbibe its spirit for the sake of its rewards. We resist the third when we make a supreme love to God the sole inspiration of our hearts, and a supreme allegiance to Him the sole rule of our lives. — *Abbott.*

11. **Leaveth him.** Luke (4: 13), "for a season." He was tempted again and again; at last in Gethsemane and on the cross. **Angels.** Spiritual beings, probably in visible form on this occasion. Alone in the contest, he had these companions after his victory. **Ministered** most naturally means "supplied him with food," as in the case of Elijah; 1 Kings 19: 5. Others think, "gave him spiritual companionship," to support him, and prove that "man doth not live by bread alone." The view that the angels brought him food, accords better with the events just narrated. He who would not turn stones into bread was now fed; he who would not call upon angels to uphold him in rash confidence, was now sustained by them; he who demanded worship for God alone, received homage from these servants of God. — *Popular Commentary.*

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Robertson's sermons, first series, "The Sympathy of Christ." President Theo. D. Woolsey's "Religion of the Present and Future," "The Temptation of Christ." Sermons on the same by Krummacher, Farrar, Vaughn, Fuller, and H. E. Manning. Farrar's and Beecher's "Life of Christ." Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations." On the Wilderness of Quarantania, see "Land and Book." For illustrations, see Milton's "Paradise Regained," book 3; on the third temptation, the Sirens, and Circe, in Homer's *Odyssey* (the story of Circe best told in Hawthorne's exquisite "Tanglewood Tales").

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. There is a story of a high mountain on whose top was a palace filled with all treasures, gold, gems, singing birds, — a paradise of pleasures. Up its sides ladies and gentlemen were climbing to reach the top; but every one who looked back was turned into stone. And yet thousands of evil spirits were around them, whispering, shouting, flashing their treasures, singing love-songs, to draw their eyes from the treasure at the top, and to make them look back; but every one that looked back was turned into stone. So is every one who is seeking heavenly treasures, tempted by earthly music and sinful joys; but whosoever yields is lost.

II. The bad man sits retailing away heaven and salvation for pence, and seldom vends any commodity, but he sells his soul with it, like brown paper, into the bargain. — *South.*

III. There was one living, who, scarcely in a figure, might be said to have the whole world. The Roman emperor Tiberius was at that moment infinitely the most powerful of living men, the absolute, undisputed, deified ruler of all that was fairest and richest in the kingdoms of the earth. There was no control to his power, no limit to his wealth, no restraint upon his pleasures. And, to yield himself still more unreservedly to the boundless self-gratification of a voluptuous luxury, not long after this time he chose for himself a home on one of the loveliest spots on the earth's surface, under the shadow of the slumbering volcano, upon an enchanting islet in one of the most softly delicious climates of the world. What came of it all? He was, as Pliny calls him, "tristissimus ut constat homi-

num," confessedly the most gloomy of mankind. And there, from this home of his hidden infamies, from this island where on a scale so splendid he had tried the experiment of what happiness can be achieved by pressing the world's most absolute authority, and the world's guiltiest indulgences, into the service of an exclusively selfish life, he wrote to his servile and corrupted senate, "What to write to you, conscript fathers, or how to write, or what not to write, may all the gods and goddesses destroy me, worse than I feel that they are daily destroying me, if I know." Rarely has there been vouchsafed to the world a more overwhelming proof that its richest gifts are but "fairy gold that turns to dust and dross." — *Farrar.*

IV. Solomon was another instance of falling before the third temptation; Moses and Elijah were examples of overcoming all; also Bunyan's Christian battling with Apollyon.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. At the beginning of the Christian life comes the great temptation, — the battle as to who shall rule the soul: its success is *conversion*.

2. The greatest battles of the world are fought on the silent battle-field of the heart: there greater victories are won, greater heroisms done, than at Thermopylæ or Waterloo.

3. The greatest temptations often come close after the highest and sweetest experiences, — as to Elijah, — after communion-seasons, after revivals.

4. Ver. 2. Times of hunger, weakness, sickness, trouble, losses, are Satan's hours of attack.

5. Ver. 4. The Bible is the Christian's armory of defence. He should so thoroughly learn his Bible as to be prepared for every attack. The Christian ignorant of the Bible is always in danger.

6. Ver. 6. The most dangerous errors are exaggerated or one-sided views of truth.

7. Ver. 7. The safety is in seeing all sides; in knowing the whole truth of God.

8. The greatest temptations come disguised in some form of good, clothed as angels of light; as, dishonest use of others' money, wine-drinking, lust.

9. Ver. 10. The battle is won by straightforward views, and doing right, without regard to consequences.

10. Christ has fought the battle, and gained the victory, with precisely the weapons which are in the hands of all Christians.

11. We are to pray, Lead us not into temptation; but, when we *are* tempted, we are not to run away, but to overcome.

12. After the battle and victory come sweet blessings from heaven, beyond the power of the untried heart to conceive.

LESSON 5. FEBRUARY 1, 1880.

TRUE DISCIPLES. — MATT. 5: 1-16.

TIME. — In the summer of A.D. 28; a year and a half after the Lord commenced his public ministry, as in our last lesson. John is in prison in the Castle of Machærus, beyond Jordan.

PLACE. — The Horns of Hattin, or Mount of Beatitudes, near the centre of the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, two or three miles from the sea, and seven south-west from Capernaum. "According to tradition, the 'Mount of Beatitudes' lies a little west of the Sea of Galilee, and is a square-shaped hill, about sixty feet in height, with two tops, called the *Horns of Hattin*, from the village of Hattin at its base." The situation so strikingly coincides with the intimations of the gospel narrative, as almost to force the inference that in this instance the eyes of those who selected the spot were for once rightly guided. It is the only height seen in this direction from the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth. The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes' walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the "level place" (of Luke) to which he would "come down" as from one of its higher horns to address the people. — *A. P. Stanley: Sinai and Palestine.*

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (15th year); Pontius Pilate governor of Judæa (3d year); Herod Antipas of Galilee (32d year); Herod Philip of other parts (32d year.)

FEBRUARY 1.

LESSON V.

MATT. 15: 1-16.

1. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

2. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹ Mark 3: 13. ² Comp. Luke 6: 17. ³ Job 3: 1. ⁴ Ps. 78: 2. ⁵ Acts 10: 34. ⁶ Comp. Luke 6: 20-23. ⁷ Ps. 51: 17.

ORDER OF EVENTS (intervening history).—From the wilderness, Jesus returns to Bethabara, and John points him out to his disciples (John 1: 19-42). Thence he goes to Galilee, and attends the marriage at Cana (John 1: 43 to 2: 12). Then he goes to Jerusalem to his *First passover*, April 9, A.D. 27, casts the traders out of the temple (John 2: 13-25). John is imprisoned in Machærus Castle, and Jesus returns to Galilee; some of his disciples are converted (Matt. 4: 18-22). He preaches over Galilee, and works many miracles. Attends his *Second passover*, March 29, A.D. 28, at Jerusalem. Returns again to Galilee, chooses his twelve disciples, and utters the *Sermon on the Mount*.

HARMONY OF LUKE AND MATTHEW.—They are two reports of the same discourse, of which Matthew's is the fuller (107 verses to Luke's 30). He stood first (Luke), and then sat down (Matthew), to teach on a mountain (Matthew), but on a level place on the mountain (Luke), from which he ascended a short distance up the hill to *better be heard*. It was primarily to the disciples (Matthew), but also for and in hearing of the multitudes (Luke).

INTRODUCTION.

The Sermon on the Mount was in a proper sense an inaugural discourse. It sets forth to his disciples and to the people the character of that kingdom of heaven which he had declared to be at hand.—*Abbott*. As those twelve chosen ministers stood with him on the Mount of Beatitudes in the morning glow that shone upon the lake, they resembled the heads of the twelve tribes, who were called up with Moses to hear the law given upon Sinai. The discourse which follows was spoken first to *them*, as the manual of their instructions, the code of the new kingdom of which they were the new ministers, the outline of the truths they were to teach. It is addressed also to the disciples in general, in that and every age, proclaiming the spirit of the new dispensation, to which they profess to have submitted, the truths they have to learn, the obligations they have to fulfil, the tests by which they must be tried, the characters they must bear, if they are indeed the disciples of Jesus. It was uttered to the disciples in the *hearing of all the people*, to whom, as representing the whole world, it points out the only path of duty and happiness, that which gives entrance to the kingdom of heaven; invites them into that kingdom by the most alluring promises of blessedness; claims their submission to its just and holy laws; and warns them of the danger and ruin of remaining without it.—*Smith's New Testament History*. **A contrast.** The *Ten Commandments* are negative, the Beatitudes positive. The one forbids, the other enjoins. The one was delivered on Mount Sinai, cold, bleak, barren, inaccessible,—a type of merely law morality; the other on Mount Hattin, beautiful, fertile, with the blue lake in the prospect, a picture of the gospel morality,—the holy religion of Christ.—*P*.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **Seeing the multitudes**, who had come to hear and be healed. Matt. 4: 25. **Went up** from the level ground, in order better to be seen and heard. **Mountain.** See "*place*." **When he was set.** This was the custom of the Jewish doctors, who sat, in token of their authority.—*Jacobus*. **His disciples came.** They gathered close to him, while the multitudes were farther off, but within hearing.

2. **Opened his mouth.** This hints of a weighty doctrine, and a special discourse.—*Jacobus*. **The beatitudes.** On these precious beatitudes, observe that, though eight in number, there are here but *seven* distinct features of character. The eighth one—"persecuted for righteousness' sake"—denotes merely the possessors of the seven preceding features, on account of which it is that they are persecuted (2 Tim. 3: 12). Accordingly, instead of any distinct promise to this class, we have merely a repetition of the first promise. This has been noticed by several critics, who by the *sevenfold* character thus set forth have rightly observed that a *complete* character is meant to be depicted, and, by the *sevenfold* blessedness attached to it, a *perfect* blessedness is intended. Observe, again, that the language in which these beatitudes are couched is purposely fetched from the Old Testament,

4. Blessed are they that mourn:¹ for they shall be comforted.² | 5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

¹ Isa. 61: 3. Ezek. 7: 16. ² John 16: 20. ³ Cor. 1: 7. ⁴ Ps. 37: 11.

to show that the new kingdom is but the old in a new form; while the characters described are but the varied forms of that *spirituality* which was the essence of real religion all along, but had well-nigh disappeared under corrupt teaching. Further, the things here promised, far from being mere arbitrary rewards, will be found in each case to grow out of the characters to which they are attached, and in their completed form are but the appropriate coronation of them. Once more, as "the kingdom of heaven," which is the first and the last thing here promised, has two stages, — a present and a future, an initial and a consummate stage, — so the fulfilment of each of these promises has two stages, — a present and a future, a partial and a perfect stage. — *J. F. and B.* We shall understand the beatitudes as a whole by arranging them something after the manner of Lange.

| The persecuted righteous- ness sake. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>(The inner life toward God.)</div> <div>I. THE POOR IN SPIRIT.</div> <div>(Its outward manifestation toward man.)</div> </div> | | The persecuted for Christ's sake. |
|---|--|---------------------|---|
| | 2. THEY THAT MOURN. | 3. THE MEEK. | |
| | 4. THEY THAT HUNGER AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. | 5. THE MERCIFUL. | |
| | 6. THE PURE IN HEART. | 7. THE PEACEMAKERS. | |

Thus shall ye be

THE SALT OF THE EARTH . . . THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

To be "poor in spirit," is the foundation of all. The *first* column, then, will express the inner life, in its natural progressive order, from mourning for sin, to hungering for righteousness, to the complete result of a pure heart. The *second* column will express the outward manifestations of this life, also in a natural progressive order, from bearing injuries, to doing positive good, to leading men to the peace which only Christ can give. Note also, that each one in the second column is the natural expression of its corresponding inner life. They that mourn for sin will be meek to sinners. They who hunger to be good will do good in mercy. Those who are pure in heart will seek most, and be most successful in, the bringing men to peace in Christ. — *P.*

3. **Blessed.** The word differs from that used in Matt. 23: 39; 25: 34, as expressing a permanent state of felicity, rather than the passive reception of a blessing bestowed by another. — *Ellicott.* **Poor in spirit.** Conscious of want, feeling the need of what is higher and better than they have. The opposite of pride and self-righteousness. It is the same spirit that is required when we are told that we must become as little children, if we would enter the kingdom. Willing and anxious to learn, to ask, to seek. This is no mean, abject feeling; no Uriah Heep humbleness, — no want of self-respect. It is the door not only to the kingdom of heaven, but to the kingdom of knowledge, of nature, of science. Science began to be a power when men went inquiring of Nature, not dictating. — *P.* **Kingdom of heaven.** Christ's kingdom. His spiritual kingdom, begun here, completed hereafter above.

4. **Blessed are they that mourn.** (1) For their sins, their weakness, from a consciousness of being far below their privileges and duties. — *P.* (2) It is an absolute promise to all those who in the kingdom of heaven are brought into the experience of mourning, and is to be interpreted by such passages as Rom. 5: 3-5, Heb. 12: 11, and Rev. 7: 14. — *Abbott.* **Shall be comforted.** "Tears like rain-drops have a thousand times fallen to the ground, and come up in flowers." — *H. W. Beecher.* "Every praying Christian will find that there is no Gethsemane without its angel." — *Binney.* They that mourn for sin shall be comforted by forgiveness and salvation from sin. They that mourn from sorrow shall, if Christians, be sustained by a thousand promises. God will make all to work out good (Rom. 8: 18) to them; and when they see God's meaning, and God's results, they will be comforted.

5. **The meek.** The mild, the gentle; opposed to the ambitious, the self-seeking spirit. — *Schaff.* Its root is the dominance of spiritual over earthly desires. — *Abbott.* They who suffer in love, or love in patience, boldly yet meekly bear injustice, and thereby conquer. — *Lange.* **Inherit the earth.** Literally, *the earth.* Christ declares that the enjoyment of earthly blessings belongs not to those who grasp for them, and assert and maintain with vehemence and care their right to them, but to those who hold them lightly, and who, ranking them inferior to spiritual blessings, are not burdened by them while they possess them,

6. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for¹ they shall be filled.

7. Blessed *are* the merciful : for² they shall obtain mercy.

8. Blessed *are* the pure³ in heart : for they shall see God.

9. Blessed *are* the⁴ peacemakers : for they shall be called the⁵ children of God.

¹ Ps. 145: 19. Isa. 65: 13. ² Ps. 41: 1, 2. ³ Ps. 24: 3, 4. Heb. 12: 14. 1 John 3: 2, 3. ⁴ Jas. 3: 18. ⁵ Rom. 8: 14.

nor harassed lest they lose them. "Selfish men may *possess* the earth : it is the meek alone who inherit it from the heavenly Father, free from all defilements and perplexities of unrighteousness."—*John Woolman's Journal* (p. 36). This beatitude is found almost in the same form in Ps. 37 : 11.—*Abbott*. He, and he only, *possesses* the earth as he goes toward heaven, by being humble and cheerful, and content with what his good God has allotted him. He has no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts, that he deserves better ; nor is he vexed when he sees others possessed of more riches or honors than his wise God has allotted his share. But he possesses what he has with a meek and contented quietness,—such a quietness as makes his very dreams pleasing both to God and himself.—*Isaak Walton*.

6. **Hunger and thirst.** Expressing intense desire, that must be satisfied. The greatness of the soul is measured by the number, the intensity, and the *quality*, of its desires. This is the highest and best desire, and men are good in proportion to its intensity. **Righteousness.** A perfect inner and outer life ; perfect conformity to God's law and nature ; the beauty of holiness. **Shall be filled.** The desire shall be satisfied abundantly. They shall be righteous, and in the future shall have a goodness beyond their present power even to conceive. Life is a series of desires and their fulfilment ; and you cannot be *satisfied* unless you first have the desire.

7. **The merciful.** Those who pity, sympathize with, and help to relieve, all misery and suffering. Mercy is near of kin to *love*. It is love to the needy, the troubled, the sinful, even those who have wronged us. It relieves spiritual want and darkness, as well as temporal ; would give the gospel to the heathen, as well as food to the hungry. **Shall obtain mercy.** Not only from men, because the tender consideration of the merciful from others re-acts in tender regard of others for ourselves, but also from God (Ps. 18 : 26. Prov. 3 : 34. Compare Matt. 18 : 23-35). "Mercy turns her back to the unmerciful" (*Quarles*).—*Abbott*.

8. **Pure in heart.** Pure, sincere, clean, in motive and purpose. That state of soul which repels, loathes, every thing vile or sinful. **Shall see God.** There must be a likeness of nature, and feeling, in order to understand another. So only the pure can *see* a pure God. The impure, the bad, cannot even *see* him, much less enjoy him. It is a moral color-blindness.

9. **Peacemakers.** Not merely they who reconcile differences between man and man, though such peace-making is included ; but they who, by their presence and disposition, as well as by their conscious acts, carry with them the spirit of peace and quietness, and bring peace to others who are perturbed and troubled. See, for a wondrous illustration of such peace-making, John 14 : 27. **Called the children of God.** Shall not only be the children of God, but shall also be recognized as such.. It is this peace-giving quality, which, above all others, is counted among men as saintliness. Observe that, as in *Jas. 3 : 17*, so here, purity precedes peace, and that there is no true peace-making which is not also in so far pure-making.—*Abbott*. No peace was ever won from fate by subterfuge or agreement ; no peace is ever in store for any of us, but that which we shall win by victory over shame or sin,—victory over the sin that oppresses, as well as over that which corrupts.—*Ruskin*. The child bears the father's likeness : they who are like God are his children ; and the peacemaker is, of all, the likeliest God.—*Vinet*.

10. **Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.** Here there is a profound significance in the order. The work of the peacemakers is not a light and easy work. Often, as of old, when we "labor for peace," men "make them ready for battle" (Ps. 120 : 7) ; but not the less is the blessing sure to follow. Amid seeming failure or seeming success, those who are persecuted, not for opinions, but for right conduct, the true martyrs and confessors of righteousness, attain their reward at last. There is something suggestive in the fact that the last promise is the same as the first. We end, as we began, with "the kingdom of heaven," but the path by which we have been led leads us to see that that includes all the intermediate blessings, of which at first it seemed but the prelude and

10. ¹Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11. ²Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

12. ³Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so ⁴persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

13. Ye are the salt of the earth: ⁵but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is

¹ 1 Pet. 3: 14. ² 1 Pet. 4: 14. ³ Acts 5: 41. ⁴ 2 Cor. 6: 10. Col. 1: 24. ⁵ 2 Chron. 36: 16. Chap. 23: 37. 1 Thess. 2: 15. ⁶ Mark 9: 50. Luke 14: 34, 35.

beginning. — *Ellicott*. But it must be truly for righteousness' sake, and not for the sake of ambitious plans, or strange doctrines, or censorious language, or proud and exclusive pretensions, if the promise annexed would be secured. If men are really persecuted for righteousness' sake, they must be truly righteous. — *Jacobus*. But how, it may be asked, could such beautiful features of character provoke persecution? To this the following answer should suffice: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." But more particularly the seven characters here described are all in the teeth of the spirit of the world, insomuch that such hearers of this discourse as breathed that spirit must have been startled, and had their whole system of thought and action rudely dashed. — *J. F. and B.* It is not *merely* because a heavenly reward compensates the persecuted for their sufferings, but more because the persecution itself intensifies the martyr's abhorrence of evil, and drives him to a closer refuge in God. — *Abbott*. **Kingdom of heaven.** (See verse 3.) As this was the reward promised to the poor in spirit, — the leading one of these seven beatitudes — of course it is the proper portion of such as are persecuted for exemplifying them. — *Farrar*.

11. **Blessed are ye when men shall revile you.** Or abuse you to your face, in opposition to backbiting. (See Mark 15: 32.) With the preceding verse the beatitudes end, in their general reference, and in this our Lord addresses *his disciples* particularly. The actions described in this verse are the expansion of "persecuted" in the last. — *Alford*. The words contain three forms, hardly three successive grades, of suffering: (1) the vague contempt showing itself in gibes and nicknames; (2) persecution generally; (3) deliberate calumnies, such as those of the foul orgies and Thyestean banquets, which were spread against the believers in Christ in the first two centuries. — *Ellicott*. **Falsely for my sake.** Lest thou shouldst think that the mere fact of being evil spoken of makes men blessed, he has set two limitations: when it is for *his sake*, and when the things that are said are *false*; for without these he who is evil spoken of, so far from being blessed, is miserable. — *Chrysostom*. **My sake.** He had before said, for righteousness' sake. Here he identifies himself and his cause with that of righteousness, binding up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of himself. — *J. F. and B.*

12. **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.** "Exult." In the corresponding passage of Luke 6: 22, 23, where every indignity trying to flesh and blood is held forth as the probable lot of such as were faithful to him, the word is even stronger than here, "leap," as if he would have their inward transport to overpower and absorb the sense of all these affronts and sufferings; nor will any thing else do it. — *J. F. and B.* **Your reward.** The teaching of Luke 17: 10 shows that even here the reward is not "of debt, but of grace" (Rom. 4: 4). It may be added that the temper to which the "reward" is promised practically excludes the possibility of such claim as of right. The reward is for those only who suffer "for righteousness, for Christ," not for those who are calculating on a future compensation. — *Ellicott*. **So persecuted they the prophets.** Jeremiah was scourged (Jer. 20: 2); Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was stoned (2 Chron. 24: 21); Isaiah, according to Jewish tradition, was sawn asunder by Manasseh. It puts them on the same level, establishes the connection between the Old and the New Testaments, showing that the old antagonism remains. — *Schaff*. Each one of the beatitudes is a saying which contradicts man's opinion, and is a distinct cross to flesh and blood. Blessed are, not the rich, but the poor; not the joyful, but the sorrowful; not the self-satisfied, the triumphant, the magnificent, but the meek, the merciful, the peacemaker, and the pure. Blessed are they that actually suffer; the despised, the ill-used, the reviled, and the outcast! — *Vaughn*.

13. **Ye are the salt of the earth.** In the East salt was the very life of life, the universal antidote to decay and putrefaction. It must enter into every thing, or the food of man and beast would fall rapidly to corruption and decay. — *Vaughn*. The servants of Christ are to mankind what salt is to the natural world, — to preserve it from corruption, to

thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14. ¹ Ye are the light of the world.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

15. ² Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a

¹ Phil. 2: 15. ² Mark 4: 21. Luke 8: 6; 11: 33.

season its insipidity, to freshen and sweeten it. The value of salt is abundantly referred to by classical writers as well as in Scripture, (Livy speaks of Greece as "the salt of nations"), and hence its symbolical significance in religious offerings. — *J. F. and B.* The remedy for the corruption of man, says our Lord here, is the active presence of his disciples among their fellows. — *Biblical Treasury.* **Have lost his savor** (or saltiness). "In the Valley of Salt, near Gebul, there is a small precipice, occasioned by the continual taking away of salt. In this you may see how the veins of it lie. I broke a piece of it, of which the part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, had perfectly lost its savor. The innermost, which had been connected with the rock, retained its savor, as I found by proof." — *Maundrell.* The truth, then, which our Lord inculcated, was that if they, the salt of the earth, the living depositaries of true wisdom and holiness among men, lost the power and savor of vital godliness, they would not only be worthless so far as the enlightening and sanctification of others were concerned, but would also be cast out themselves. A professing Christian may have the sparks and glittering particles of true wisdom, like this savorless salt, but be without its pungency and power. — *Farrar.* The world is upheld by the veracity of good men: they make the earth wholesome. — *R. W. Emerson.* **Cast out . . . trodden under foot.** It is a well-known fact that the salt of *this country* (Palestine), when in contact with the ground, or exposed to rain and sun, does become insipid and useless. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street. So troublesome is this corrupted salt that no man will allow it to be thrown on to his field; and the only place for it is the street, and there it is cast to be trodden under foot of men. — *W. M. Thomson.* Salt cannot restore that which is decayed, but only preserve from decay. — *Abbott.*

14. **Ye are the light of the world.** The influence of salt is internal, of light external. Light is opposed to darkness, and dispels it: is the symbol of truth and holiness. Christ's disciples are opposed to the world, and yet are to transform it by driving away its ignorance and sin. They become the light of the world, because he is "the true Light," and makes them partakers of his light. — *Schaff.* The comparison to the "candle," or "lamp," in verse 15, shows that even here the disciples are spoken of as shining in the world with a derived brightness flowing to them from the Fount of Light. — *Ellicott.* Christians are the lights *lighted*; Christ is the Light, *lighting*. — *Augustine.* And this was said of a little company of obscure men, — fishermen, small farmers, here and there a publican, a few women in humble life, the poor of a subjugated and despised race; not a priest, a scholar, or a ruler among them. — *Bible-Reader's Commentary.* **A city set on a hill.** Assuming the Sermon on the Mount to have been preached from one of the hills of Galilee near the "horns of Hattin," our Lord may have looked or pointed at Safed, 2,650 feet above the sea, commanding one of the grandest panoramic views in Palestine. It is now one of the four holy cities of the Jews, and probably existed as a fortress in our Lord's time. — *Thomson's The Land and the Book*, p. 273. No image could so vividly set forth the calling of the Church of Christ as a visible society. For good or for evil, it could not fail to be prominent in the world's history, a city of refuge for the weary, or open to the attacks of the invader. — *Ellicott.*

15. **The candle, rather, lamp.** In ancient times lamps were made of earthenware, and the wealthy had them of brass, silver, and gold. The poor alone still use lamps of earthenware. They are in the shape of a small plate or saucer, with the edge turned up at one side to hold the wick, and contain a spoonful of oil. Some are of tin, and have a cover. The olive-oil is used to burn in them. — *Van Lennep.* **The bushel.** The ordinary household measure, holding about a peck, commonly of wood. Under this the light could be hid. — *Schaff.* **On a candlestick, or lampstand.** The modern Orientals use stands of brass or wood, on which to raise the lamps to a sufficient height



LAMP-STAND.

candlestick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16. Let your light so shine before

men,¹ that they may see your good works, and ² glorify your Father which is in heaven.

¹ 1 Pet. 2 : 2. ² John 15 : 8. Phil. 1 : 11.

above the floor on which they sit. Such stands are shaped not unlike a tall candlestick, spreading out at the top. Sometimes the lamps are placed on brackets against the wall, and often upon stools. — *Kitto*.

16. **Let your light so shine.** When men light a candle, they do not *conceal* the light, but place it where it may be of use. So it is with religion. It is given that we may benefit others. It is not to be concealed, but suffered to show itself, and to shed light on a surrounding wicked world. — *Barnes*. It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts as fire is carried in the flint-stones ; but we are outwardly, visibly, apparently, to serve and honor the living God. — *Richard Hooker*. **Good works.** Does this conflict with what Paul says about good works ? No ! for, though we are saved by faith, it is *unto* good works. — *Abbott*. **Glorify your Father.** The Pharisee displays his light : the true Christian simply *lets his shine*. The Pharisee glorifies himself by his works : the true disciple glorifies only his heavenly Father. — *Abbott*. The supreme end both of the shining and seeing is to glorify our Father in heaven. — *Schaff*. The praise and glory of a well-lighted and brilliant feast would be given not to the light, but to the master of the house ; and, of a stately city on a hill, not to the buildings, but to those who built them. — *Alford*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Stier's "Discourses of Jesus." J. Cumming's "Benedictions." On the meaning of "poor in spirit," there is great help in Phillips Brooks's sermon on Humility, in his volume of sermons. Sermons by H. W. Beecher, on ver. 5, Series 3 ; on vers. 6 and 11-16, Series 8 ; ver. 16, Series 2 ; numbers 7, 26, 31, and 33 of "National Preacher." Ruskin's "Modern Painters," vol. v., last chapter, on "Peace," a capital application. Also a very little book called "The Sister's Dream of Heaven," an excellent illustration of the need of the pure heart in order to see God, and abide in heaven. On persecution, see Phelps's "Studies in the Old Testament," article "The Men in the Fire," p. 261.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Goethe's wonderful Tale of Tales (especially as interpreted by Carlyle in his Essays) represents a fisherman's hut, rough and dark, as changed into solid silver by the shining of the lamp within, and soon even the form was changed into a beautiful temple of exquisite workmanship. Such a power to transform the heart and the world are these beatitudes, lighted with the love and faith from Jesus. And they will change not only the heart, but in due time the very forms of human life, into a fit temple for the Holy Ghost. — *P*.

II. Ver. 15. The Egyptians, who made use of hieroglyphics to signify several things, expressed a man who confined his knowledge and discoveries altogether within himself by the figure of a dark lantern, closed on all sides, which, though it was illuminated within, afforded no manner of light or advantage to such as stood by it. — *Biblical Treasury*.

III. Ver. 16. As is the light-house to the tempest-tossed and sea-worn mariner, so is the Christian to the world around. If it be a matter of vital importance for the safety of life and property, that the light-house should have the utmost care and attention, how much more important is it that the Christian's light should burn with a bright and steady lustre amid the surrounding darkness !

IV. Some years ago, on the coast of Florida was a light-house, one of the panes of glass in which was accidentally broken, just at night, too late to have it replaced. The wind was blowing strongly ; and, to keep it from putting the light out entirely, the keeper put a piece of tin in the place of the glass. The light shone over the deep except where that tin threw a dark shadow, widening as it lay upon the distant sea, till it covered many a mile. Vessels in the shadow saw no light, where one ought to have been ; and several were wrecked upon the rocks, and lost, because, while the light was burning as bright as ever, it did not shine where it should. So a single fault or bad habit often hides some of the Christian's light ; and men are lost because they live in that shadow, and he does not let his light shine on them.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. Multitudes are drawn to Jesus, as men in winter to a fire, or hungry men to a feast. We must draw men by holding up Jesus, who has all men need.
2. The twelve disciples were nearest Jesus. There is a church within the Church, and it gathers oftenest at the prayer-meeting where Jesus is.
3. Ver. 3. Christ's "blesseds" are the exact opposite of the world's blessed.
4. The beatitudes were uttered on a lovely mountain, to show how attractive and blessed they are. The Law was uttered on rugged Sinai, amid thunders and lightnings, to make men afraid to break it.
5. The laws of the kingdom of heaven, if obeyed on earth, will change earth to heaven.
6. By obeying these laws we become fitted for heaven.
7. If we disobey we *cannot* enter heaven. We are not shut out arbitrarily, but by a character to which heaven is impossible. The choir is shut to those who will not learn to sing.
8. Christ works from within, outward.
9. Vers. 10-12. Heaven is the reward of those who suffer for Christ on earth. No triumphs without battles.
10. Ver. 13. A mere formal religion will save no one.
11. Vers. 14-16. Those who have Christ's light *will* let it shine.
12. That light which shines farthest, to the heathen, to the worst sinners, shines brightest at home.
13. The true Christian's light always glorifies, not himself, but God and his Saviour, for he acknowledges God as the Author of his good deeds.

LESSON VI. — FEB. 8, 1880.

THE TRULY RIGHTEOUS. — MATT. 5 : 17-26.

TIME. — The summer of A.D. 28. Same time as the last lesson.

PLACE. — The Mount of Beatitudes. The Horns of Hattin, near the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (15); Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (3). Herod Antipas, of Galilee (32); and Herod Philip, of Perea and other parts (32).

CONNECTION.

1. The occasion of this part of the discourse was either the false notion that the Messiah would introduce a period of license (verse 17), or the antagonism between what he had just said and the teaching of the Pharisees. — *Schaff*. 2. To make clear the nature of his kingdom, Christ points out its contrast with, *first*, the Mosaic law; and *second*, the traditional and ceremonial religion of the scribes and Pharisees. He has been accused of disregarding the laws of Moses (Mark 2 : 24. John 5 : 10, 16). It is not true. The Messiah comes to fulfil, not to repeal, the Old-Testament law. He has been charged with irreligion; he replies that the religion of his disciples must exceed that of their accusers, or they can never enter the kingdom of God (17-20). He explains his first declaration by showing how the laws of the kingdom of heaven require all that the Mosaic law required, and much more (21-48). — *Abbott*.

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|---|---|
| 17. ¹ Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. | heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. |
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| | |
|--|--|
| 18. For verily I say unto you, ² Till | 19. ³ Whosoever therefore shall |
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¹ 1 Rom. 3 : 31. ² Luke 16 : 17. ³ Jas. 2 : 10. Comp. Gal. 3 : 10.

EXPLANATORY.

17. Think not I am come to destroy. To undo, or do away with. Christ's mission not negative and destructive, but positive and constructive; Christianity is neither revolution nor restoration, but a new creation, which, however, conserves and perfects all that is

good in the old. — *Schaff*. "As the shell breaks when the bird is hatched; as the sheath withers when the bud bursts into leaf; as the rough sketch is done with when the picture is finished; as the toys of boyhood are laid by in adolescence,"—so the system of law, which is preparatory only, is superseded, not repealed or destroyed; and this just in the proportion in which the individual, the community, or the race comes into a moral state in which it no longer needs to be commanded and forbidden (Gal. 3: 24, 25; 4: 1-6. — *Abbott*. The law. The law and the prophets was that system of faith and practice taught by Moses in the law, and by the prophets in their messages. — *Jacobus*. Not merely the Pentateuch as a book, or the prophets as the other portions of the Old Testament, but also the gradual spiritual development of Old Testament revelation which they embody. — *Lange*. To fulfil. Christ fulfils the law: (1) theoretically, by unfolding its deep spiritual significance, as in this sermon; (2) practically, in his holy life, a perfect pattern for imitation; (3) by realizing the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; (4) by redeeming us through his expiatory death from the penalty and curse of the broken law; (5) by enabling us, through his Holy Spirit, to fulfil the law in gratitude to him and in living union with him. — *Schaff*. Not to destroy, but to fulfil, is a general principle in Christ's salvation. (1) He came not to destroy *nature*, but to fulfil it, by filling it full of spiritual meaning; the stars tell of the star of Bethlehem; the harvests, of spiritual harvests; the flowers, of God's gentle care; the water, of the water of life; and food, of the bread of heaven. (2) He fulfils the *law* (as in Schaff above). (3) He fulfils the *Jewish kingdom*, in his kingdom of the Messiah. (4) He fulfils the *passover*, in his sacrifice and in the Lord's Supper. (5) He fulfils the *temple*, in every Christian heart and church. (6) He does not destroy our *manhood*, our humanity, but fulfils it, by giving our natures more power, more enjoyment, better uses, by guiding by his love, and doing all to his glory. (7) He fulfils *life* by making it eternal and eternally blessed. — *P*.

18. *Verily*. A solemn asseveration, used to introduce important announcements. — *Lange*. The first occurrence in the Gospel of the word so common in our Lord's teaching seems the right place for dwelling on its meaning. It is the familiar *Amen* of the Church's worship. Coming from the Hebrew root for "fixed, steadfast, true," it was used for solemn affirmation or solemn prayer. "So is it," or "so be it." — *Ellicott*. *I say unto you*. Christ appeals to himself as authority, here and elsewhere, in his most solemn and weighty disclosures of truth; his "I say unto you" is equivalent to the prophetic formula, "thus saith the Lord." — *Abbott*. *Till heaven and earth pass*. This is a proverbial phrase, often occurring in Scripture, and sometimes in the classics, to signify that a thing can never happen (Ps. 120: 26. Luke 16: 17. Matt. 24: 35, &c.). It was a received opinion among the Jews, that the visible universe would never pass away, but be renovated, and so last forever. We often say that a thing will never happen *so long as the world stands*. — *Jacobus*. *One jot or one tittle*. The "jot" is the Greek *iota* (ι), the Hebrew *yod* (י), the smallest of all the letters of the alphabet. The "tittle" was one of the smaller strokes, or twists of other letters, such, e.g., as distinguished ד (D) from ר (R), or כ (K) from ב (B). Jewish rabbis used to caution their scholars against so writing as to cause one letter to be mistaken for another, and to give examples of passages from the Law, in which such a mistake would turn a divine truth into nonsense or blasphemy. The *yod* (י) in its turn was equally important. — *Ellicott*. At the time of Christ the Old-Testament scripture existed, of course, only in manuscript. In the Hebrew Bible are over 66,000 jots. The Hebrew copyists were scrupulous to the last degree, and regarded the slightest error in their copy fatal. For the purpose of illustration, Christ takes this well-known veneration of the copyists for the most minute details in their copying. — *Abbott*. *In no wise pass*. The meaning is obvious enough: "Nothing truly belonging to the law, however seemingly trivial, shall drift away and be forgotten until it has done all that it was meant to do." — *Ellicott*. *Till all be fulfilled*. Literally, *Till all things have come to pass*. The words in the English version suggest an identity with the "fulfil" of verse 17, which is not found in the Greek. The same formula is used in the Greek of Matt. 24: 34. The "all things" in both cases are the great facts of our Lord's life, death, resurrection, and the establishment of the kingdom of God. — *Ellicott*. Just in the proportion in which, by the baptism of the Spirit and the regeneration and sanctification of the character, the law is fulfilled, it ceases to bind, *but no further*. If lust and anger are still in the heart, the law against adultery and murder are not superseded. — *Abbott*. It is important to observe in these days how the Lord here *includes the Old Testament and all its unfolding of the divine purposes regarding himself, in his teaching of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven*. I say this, because it is always in *contempt and setting aside of the Old Testament* that rationalism has begun. First, its *historical truth*, then its *theocratic dispensation* and the *types and prophecies* connected with it, are swept away; so that Christ came to fulfil nothing, and becomes only a teacher or a martyr; and thus the way is paved for a similar rejection of the New Testament,

break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall

do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed

beginning with the narratives of the birth and infancy, as theocratic myths, advancing to the denial of his miracles, then attacking the truthfulness of his own sayings, which are grounded on the Old Testament as a revelation from God, and so finally leaving us nothing in the Scriptures but, as a German writer of this school has expressed it, "a mythology not so attractive as that of Greece." That this is the course which unbelief *has run* in Germany, should be a pregnant warning to the decriers of the Old Testament among ourselves. It should be a maxim for every expositor and every student, that Scripture is a *whole*, and stands or falls together. That this is now beginning to be deeply felt in Germany, we have cheering testimonies in the later editions of their best commentators, and in the valuable work of Stier on the discourses of our Lord. — *Alford*.

19. **Whosoever therefore shall break.** Rather, *relax*. The Greek word is generally translated *loose*, and when not used metaphorically embodies the idea of freeing from restraints. — *Abbott*. The essential idea is that of loosening and dissolving. This is a practical and personal application of the principles just laid down (vers. 17, 18). — *Alexander*. **One of these least commandments.** Refers to one *jot* or tittle above, and means one of those minute commands which seem as insignificant in comparison with the greater, as the *jot* and tittle in comparison with great portions of writing. — *Alford*. The "least commandments," then, are those which seemed trivial, yet were really great ; the control of thoughts, desires, words, as compared with the apparently greater commands that dealt with acts. — *Ellicott*. The subsequent part of the chapter, especially the next verse, shows that our Lord does not command a strict observance of the letter of the ceremonial law. He there condemns those most scrupulous on these points. — *Schaff*. **And shall teach men so.** By precept or example leading others into the same false depreciation of the law, or even of what seem to be its least important precepts, as no longer binding in the kingdom of Messiah. — *Alexander*. **The least in the kingdom of heaven.** In the new dispensation he was proclaiming. On kingdom of heaven, see Lesson III. v. 2. They are not shut out from the kingdom, because they love God and his law in their hearts, but are least, because with their good they do much harm, and injure the truth and the people. So, many errorists may themselves be saved, while some of their teachings may be wrong and injurious (1 Cor. 3 : 12-15). **Whosoever shall do** (obey themselves), **and teach.** Expounding the law, as Christ in this chapter expounds it, so as to bring out its spiritual meaning, and accomplish its spiritual purposes. — *Abbott*. **Shall be called** (i.e., recognized in the highest sense, both generally and by the Highest himself, as such) **great.** Not *greatest*. That honor belonged to Christ alone.

20. **Except your righteousness.** Obedience, rectitude. — *Schaff*. *Purity of heart and life*, as set forth by example in the doing, and by precept in the teaching. — *Alford*. **Exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.** Here for the first time the scribes are mentioned in our Lord's teaching. The frequent combination of the two words (thirteen times in the first three Gospels) implies that for the most part they were of the school of the Pharisees. — *Ellicott*. Consequent upon the wonderful revival of Judaism under Ezra and his associates, an order known, indifferently, as "scribes" (writers), "teachers of the law" or "rabbis," gradually rose, who devoted themselves to the study of the law exclusively, and became the recognized authorities in all matters connected with it. The comments thus delivered formed, as time rolled on, a great body of unwritten law, which claimed equal authority with the law of Moses, and was necessarily known in any full degree only by the professional rabbis, who devoted their lives to its study. They were the brain, the eyes, the ears, the nerves, the muscles, of the people, who were mere children apart from them. Religiousness was (to them) measured by the more or less complete observance of ten thousand rabbinical rules of ceremonial purity. — *Geikie*. The PHARISEES, the *separate*, — so called from their pretended holiness, — represent the traditional orthodoxy, the dead formalism, the legal self-righteousness, of Judaism. — *Schaff*. See Lesson III. The Pharisees, eminent for learning, influence, and numbers (they amounted, according to Josephus, to not less than six thousand in the time of Herod), secured a powerful party among the people, and acquired great political significance. — *Neander*. **Ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.** Into *this* kingdom none *can* enter who are satisfied with merely an outward standard of righteousness, but those who obey Christ's precepts in their hearts. Forms do not make heaven, only loving hearts can.

the righteousness¹ of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21. ²Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ³Thou shalt not

kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment :

22. But I say unto you, That ⁴who-soever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the

¹ Rom. 10: 3. ² Verses 27, 33, 38, 43. ³ Exod. 20: 13. Deut. 5: 17. ⁴ 1 John 3: 15.

21. Our Lord proceeds to contrast the Pharisaic doctrine as to several most familiar sins, with his own requisitions in regard to the same matters; the result in each case being, that the standard of morality in his church or kingdom would be vastly higher than among the strictest Jewish moralists of that day. — *Alexander*. **Ye have heard.** "This was the report of the law given you by your teachers in school and synagogue. I give you another and truer report. Not what you so heard, but what I now say unto you, is the true completion of the law and the prophets, and therefore the abiding law of my kingdom." — *Ellicott*. **By them of old time.** Rather, probably, to them of old time (or to the ancients). Either reading is grammatically correct, but the weight of authority appears to sanction the latter. — *Abbott*. The contrasts here are not between the law misunderstood and the law rightly understood, but between the law and its ancient exposition, and the same as spiritualized, fulfilled by Christ; not between two lawgivers, Moses and Christ, but between *they of old time* and *you*. — *Alford*. **Thou shalt not kill.** Murder was prohibited (Exod. 20 : 13); the penalty was death (chap. 21 : 12); but provision was made for the escape of one accidentally killing another. — *Abbott*. **Whosoever shall kill, commit actual murder, shall be in danger of the judgment, i. e.,** subject to trial by an earthly court, probably the one in the place he lived. The interpretation of the scribes; correct, but not complete. — *Schaff*.

22. **I say unto you.** The *I* is emphasized in the Greek. It was this probably that, more than any thing else, led to the feeling of wonder expressed in Matt. 7 : 28, 29. The scribe in his teaching invariably referred to this rabbi and that: the new Teacher spoke as one having a higher authority of his own. — *Ellicott*. **Whosoever is angry with his brother.** The teaching is not that the emotion of anger, with or without a cause, stands on the same level of guilt with murder, but that the former so soon expands and explodes into the latter, that it will be brought to trial and sentenced according to the merits of each case, the occasion of the anger, the degree in which it has been checked or cherished, and the like. — *Ellicott*. **Without a cause.** The best authorities omit "without cause." Probably inserted by way of mitigation. — *Schaff*. **Judgment.** As no earthly tribunal can take cognizance of emotions as such, the "judgment" here is clearly that of the unseen Judge dealing with offences which in his eyes are of the same character as those which come before the human judges. "Hates any man the thing he would not kill?" — *Ellicott*. **Raca.** Raca often occurs in the Talmud. It is equivalent to a worthless person, in a light and frivolous sense. "It is a word used by one that despises another with the utmost scorn." — *Geikie*. **Council.** The Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, which consisted of seventy-two members; the highest earthly court. **Thou fool.** The word translated "Thou fool" in this passage does not mean a person devoid of sense, but "thou vile apostate," or "thou impious wretch," a term denoting the utmost malice and contempt. — *Ellicott*. **Shall be in danger of hell fire.** Gehenna is the word here translated "hell-fire." It was originally Gē benē Hinnom, the valley of the sons of Hinnom, under the south walls of Jerusalem. Children were burned alive there to Moloch till the days of King Josiah. The howlings of the infants and the foul idolatry made it the symbol of hell, and this was strengthened by its being afterward used as the place where the refuse of the temple sacrifices was burned up continually in a fire that was never quenched. — *Geikie*. Great confusion has arisen here and elsewhere from the use of the same English word for two Greek words of very different meanings: (1) *Hades*, answering to the *Sheol* (also for the most part translated "hell") of the Old Testament, the unseen world, the region or state of the dead, without any reference to their blessedness or misery; (2) *Gehenna*, which had come to represent among the later Jews (not in the time of any Old Testament writer) the place of future punishment. — *Ellicott*. There were among the Jews three well-known degrees of guilt, coming respectively under the cognizance of the local and the supreme courts, called here "the judgment" and the "council" or Sanhedrim; and after these is set the "Gehenna of fire," the end of the malefactor, whose corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the flame. Similarly, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shall the sins even of thought and word be brought into judgment, and

judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother,¹ Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of ²hell fire.

23. Therefore, if ³thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember-

est that thy brother hath aught against thee,

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

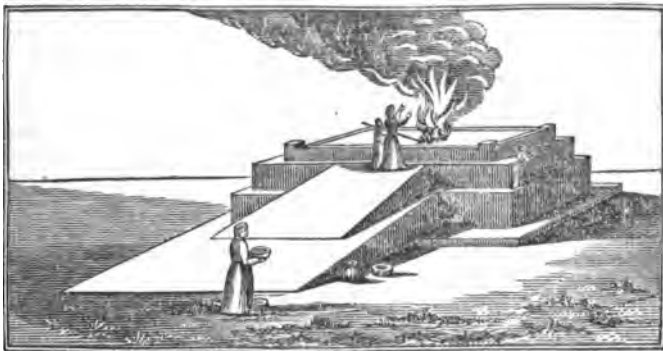
25. ⁴Agree with thine adversary

¹ Chaps. 10; 17; 26: 59, etc. ² Chap 18: 9. Mark 9: 47. ³ Chaps. 8: 4; 23: 9. ⁴ Luke 12: 58, 59.

punished, each according to its degree of guilt, but even the least of them before no less a tribunal than the judgment-seat of Christ. There is here no distinction of *kind* between these punishments, but only of *degree*. In the thing compared, the "judgment" inflicted death by the sword, the "council" death by stoning, and the disgrace of the "Gehenna of fire" followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same,—*death*. So also in the subject of the similitude, all the punishments are *spiritual*; all result in *eternal death*.—*Alford*.

23. Therefore. An application of the teaching above.—*Pop. Com.* Gift. Sacrifice. Compare Matt. 8: 4; 23: 18, 19. Altar. In the temple. To bring a sacrifice to the altar was the Jewish method of public worship. The modern equivalent would be, "If thou goest to church."—*Abbott*. Thy brother. (In the sense of neighbor.) Hath aught against thee. That is the right time for recollection and self-scrutiny. The worshipper is to ask himself, not whether he has a ground of complaint against any one, but whether any one has cause of complaint against him.—*Ellicott*.

24. Leave there thy gift. The picture is drawn from life. It transports us to the moment when the Israelite, having brought his sacrifice to the court of the Israelites, awaited the instant when the priest would approach to receive it at his hands. He waits with his gift at the rails which separate the place where he stands from the court of the priests, into which his offering will presently be taken, there to be slain by the priest, and by him presented upon the altar of sacrifice.—*Tholuck*. It is at this solemn moment, when about to cast himself upon divine mercy, and seek in his offering a seal of divine forgiveness, that the offerer is supposed, all at once, to remember that some brother has a just cause of complaint against him. What then? Is he to say, As soon as I have offered this gift I will go straight to my brother, and make it up with him? Nay; but before another step is taken—even before the offering is presented—this reconciliation is to be sought, though the gift have to be left unoffered before the altar.—*J. F. and B.* The whole language implies the urgency of the case. It is better to let even the worship of God be interrupted than that brotherly love should not continue; and indeed there is no true worship where the heart fails in brotherly love. Compare with this teaching John 14: 21, 23, with 15: 12, 17; and 1 John 4: 7, 8, 20. It gives a hint why prayer is often unavailing, and worship unsatisfying.—*Abbott*. It was a beautiful practice of the early Church, to see that all differences amongst brethren and sisters in Christ were made up, in the spirit of love, before going to the holy communion; and the Church of England has a rubrical direction to this effect in her communion service. Certainly, if this be the highest act of worship on earth, such reconciliation—though obligatory on all other occasions of worship—must be peculiarly so then.—*J. F. and B.*



THE ALTAR.

quickly,¹ while thou art in the way with him ; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

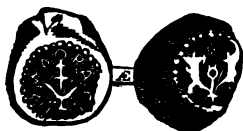
26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

¹ Ps. 32: 6. Isa. 55: 6.

25. The whole of this verse is the earthly example of a spiritual duty which is understood, and runs parallel with it. The sense of this verse is: "As in worldly affairs it is prudent to make up a matter with an adversary before judgment is passed, which may deliver a man to a hard and rigorous imprisonment, so reconciliation with an offended brother in this life is absolutely necessary before his wrong shall cry against us to the great Judge, and we be cast into eternal condemnation."—*Alford*. **Thine adversary.** Accuser or creditor. In the way. That is, on the road to the court or judge. After they came to the judge it would be too late, the law must take its course. By the Roman law, the aggrieved could compel the other party to go with him before the prætor; but they might agree by the way to settle, which was often done. Do not be slow to do justice, for the matter will grow more serious.—*Jacobus*. **Officer.** The same as sheriff.

26. Verily I say unto thee. The prudent course in worldly affairs points out the prudent course in the higher sphere. "Reconciliation with an offended brother in this life is absolutely necessary before his wrong cry against us to the great Judge, and we be cast into eternal condemnation."—*Alford*. This view can be held without definitely assigning a higher meaning to adversary and officer, &c. The warning against lawsuits is evident enough, but is not the principal thought.—*Schaff*. **The last farthing.** A coin of insignificant value (equivalent to about seven mills of our money). The meaning is: until every thing is paid. If our sins be regarded as "debts" this is impossible, but no conclusive argument for or against the eternity of punishment can be based on the figure. See, however, Luke 12: 59, where the reference to future punishment is perhaps more marked.—*Schaff*.

"These words, as in the earthly example they imply future liberation, because an earthly debt can be paid in most cases, so in the spiritual counterpart they amount to a negation of it, because the debt can never be discharged."—*Alford*. (Matt. 18: 30. Luke 7: 42.)



JEWISH FARTHING.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Trench on the Sermon on the Mount, Thomas's "Genius of the Gospel." On ver. 17 see Wayland's "Life of Chalmers," p. 39, &c.; his experience of Christ fulfilling the law at Kilmany. See Hepworth's sermon in "Pulpit Eloquence." Tillotson, vol. vii. E. de Pressensé, in "The Redeemer." On ver. 20, Mozley's "University Sermons." Vers. 25, 26, Emmons's Nat. Preacher, II. For an illustration of reconciliation to man, before we can worship God, see Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," part 4, and the two verses preceding the last two, in part 7.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Not to destroy, but to fulfil. When a bell is made, two moulds of sand are made, an inner and an outer, so arranged as to form between them precisely the shape desired for the bell. The metal is poured in, and then the moulds are broken. But that form is not destroyed, it is only fulfilled, and the bell rings out the glad song of fulfilment.—*P*.

II. Christ fulfils the law. Dr. Chalmers at Kilmeny preached the law with all the force of his eloquent nature. And he in his farewell address bears this witness: "I never heard of any such reformation being effected among them in this way. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and proprieties of social life had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners." Dr. Chalmers, while at Kilmany, was truly converted to Christ; and then, when he preached the love and atonement of Christ, he again bears witness that by this he found that men obeyed the moral law, and he declares, "You have at least taught me that to preach Christ is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches." (Wayland's "Life of Chalmers," p. 39-42.) Every true revival bears the same testimony.—*P*.

III. George the Fourth, wishing to take the sacrament, sent for the Bishop of Winchester to administer it. The messenger loitered by the way. On the arrival of the prelate, his delay was complained of, and its cause explained. His Majesty immediately rang his bell, and commanded the attendance of the messenger. He rebuked him sharply, and dismissed him from his service. Then he addressed the Bishop thus : "Now, my lord, if you please, we will proceed." His lordship, with great mildness, but with firmness, refused to administer the sacrament whilst any irritation or anger towards a fellow-creature remained on the mind of his Majesty, who, suddenly recollecting himself, said, "My lord, you are right ;" and then sent for the offending party, whose forgiveness and restoration to favor he pronounced in terms of great kindness and condescension. — *Bib. Museum.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 17. It is very easy to find fault with what is, to tear down ; but he only is a true reformer who builds up positive truth and life.

2. A negative religion is comparatively a useless religion. That only is good which imparts new life.

3. Mere breaking off bad habits does not really reform a man, without a new heart, new life, new love.

4. Christ gives *more* to nature, to life, — he does not take away.

5. Ver. 18. The Old Testament is of divine authority, a necessary aid to understanding the New.

6. There is a progression in the Bible, as of an oak from an acorn : as of the calculus, from the four first rules of arithmetic. The lower is fulfilled, not denied or destroyed.

7. Ver. 19. Only he who *does* God's will can successfully teach it.

8. It is bad to be in error. It is terrible to teach it. Teachers should use the utmost care as to what they teach.

9. Ver. 20. Christ fits for heaven by giving the heavenly character.

10. He whose religion is in forms and creeds alone cannot enter heaven.

11. Ver. 22. Christ puts a new spirit in the law. Men keep it far better, from love to him.

12. Vers. 23-25. Religion always reconciles men to one another, settles difficulties, and quarrels.

13. It reconciles men to God.

14. There is no true morality, no acceptable obedience, till the heart is reconciled to God.

LESSON VII. — FEBRUARY 15, 1880.

THE TONGUE AND THE TEMPER. — MATT. 5 : 33-48.

TIME. — In the summer of A.D. 28, — the same as the last two lessons.

PLACE. — The Mount of Beatitudes ; the Horns of Hattin, near the Sea of Galilee, on the western shore.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa ; Herod Antipas, of Galilee ; Herod Philip, of Perea and other parts.

INTRODUCTION.

This lesson is only a further illustration and appreciation of the general principles laid down by Christ in vers. 17-20. Christ corrects other false interpretations of the law, and shows how much higher was the standard of morality that he inculcated than that which had hitherto been taught and practised. He gives as an example, (1) that of the law against swearing, vers. 33-37. (2) The law of retaliation, vers. 38-41. (3) The law regulating our relations with enemies, vers. 43-47. The 48th verse is the summing-up of the part of the Sermon on the Mount which is contained in this and the preceding lesson. It is the complement of vers. 17-20, and shows how the law is fulfilled in Christ ; and, indeed, it is the summing-up of the whole law as given by Moses in the Ten Commandments, and interpreted by Christ both by his teaching and example.

33. ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,¹ Thou shalt not forswear thyself,² but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34. But I say unto you,³ Swear not

at all; neither by heaven; for⁴ it is God's throne:

35. Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is⁵ the city of the great King.

36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy

¹ Lev. 19: 12. ² Num. 30: 2. ³ Jas. 5: 12. ⁴ Isa. 66: 1. Chap. 23: 22. ⁵ Ps. 48: 2.

EXPLANATORY.

33. Hath been said by them (see Lesson VI., ver. 21), or, *to* them in, [of] old time. In the former history of the Jews, when they received the law, and in their interpretations of it. **Thou shalt not forswear thyself.** Swear falsely—perjure thyself. The Old Testament reference seems to be partially to the third commandment (which, however, primarily relates to profane swearing, though perhaps also to perjury), but more directly to Lev. 19: 12. To this, however, is added a second clause, perhaps in substance taken from Deut. 23: 21, but which seems to have been practically employed as a gloss on the former, so as to render it of more effect. We know from chap. 23: 16 that the scribes and Pharisees declared oaths to be binding or not, according to the supposed sanctity of the object sworn by; and from other evidence it appears that some at least considered both profane swearing and perjury to be excusable, provided the oath was not taken in the name of God.—*Cook.* **Shalt perform** (sacredly stand by and fulfil what is engaged in the oath) unto the Lord thine oaths; i.e., oaths made unto the Lord or in the name of the Lord were to be kept, but they would say, "Whatever thou shalt swear not to the Lord may be transgressed."—*Jacobus.* **Oaths.** An oath is a solemn affirmation or declaration, made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed, and imprecating his vengeance, and renouncing his favor, if what is affirmed is false.—*Barnes.*

34. But I say. The emphasis is on the *I*. Swear not at all. Our Lord passes so far beyond this rule (ver. 33) that he lays down (including in it the understanding that all oaths must be kept *if made*, for they are all alternately referable to swearing by God) the rule of the Christian community, which is, **Swear not at all.**—*Alford.* Not a few interpreters, and even whole Christian communities, as, e.g., the Society of Friends, see in these words, and in Jas. 5: 12, a formal prohibition of all oaths, either promissory or evidential.—*Ellicott.* Our Saviour here evidently had no reference to *judicial* oaths, or oaths taken in a court of justice.—*Barnes.* Judicial oaths ought not to be called "swearing." If two words were used for two such different things as profane swearing and judicial oaths, it would help some consciences. The conduct of our Lord himself in answering the adjuration of the high priest (chap. 26: 63, 64), as well as the language of St. Paul on various occasions (Rom. 1: 9. 2 Cor. 1: 23. Gal. 1: 20; cf. Heb. 6: 16, 17), may be adduced to show that this passage is not intended to forbid an appeal to God on solemn occasions.—*Cook.* The sin which our Lord condemned was the light use of oaths in common speech, and with no real thought as to their meaning. Such oaths practically involved irreverence, and were therefore inconsistent with the fear of God. Practically, it must be admitted that the needless multiplication of oaths, both evidential and promissory, on trivial occasions, has tended, and still tends, to weaken awe and impair men's reverence for truth.—*Ellicott.* The more swearing, the more falsehood, says Coleridge. **Neither by heaven; for it is God's throne.** Swearing by heaven is, in fact, to swear by God himself. An oath, as a religious act, consisting in the solemn invocation of an omniscient witness to attest the truth of what is uttered, cannot, from its very nature, terminate on any creature, much less on a lifeless and material object. Swearing by heaven, therefore, either has no meaning, or derives it from the fact that heaven is the residence, the court, the throne, of God.—*Alexander.* **Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool** (quoting Isa. 66: 1). Swearing by *that*, therefore, is really swearing by God. **Neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King** (quoting Ps. 48: 2). The capital or royal residence of Jehovah, as the immediate Head of the nation, and owes to that relation all its sanctity and even its significance as an object to be sworn by; so that he who swears by it either swears by God or does not swear at all.—*Alexander.* The casuistry of the rabbis had so darkened the whole subject of oaths, that they had become utterly worthless; and endless refinements opened facilities for any one to break them who wished.—*Geikie.* **By thy head . . . canst not make one hair white or black.** Thou

head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

38. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said,¹ An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

39. But I say unto you,² That ye resist not evil :³ but⁴ whosoever shall

¹ Exod. 21 : 24. Lev. 24 : 20. Deut. 19 : 21. ² 1 Cor. 6 : 7. ³ Deut. 19 : 19. 1 Cor. 5 : 13. ⁴ Luke 6 : 29, 30.

hast no control over the appearance of gray hairs on thy head — thy head is not thine own ; thou swearest, then, by a creature of God, whose destinies and changes are in God's hand ; so that *every oath is an appeal to God*. And, indeed, men generally regard it as such now, even unconsciously. — *Alford*. Christ here condemns all those "half-veiled" blasphemies which, common in our times as in his, are nearly all traceable, historically, to an appeal, more or less direct, to the name of God. Thus nearly all the expletives used in common and even fashionable life to strengthen or confirm our assertions are degenerate oaths, a direct violation of the third commandment as Christ here interprets it. It is no answer to this, to say that those who use such phrases do not intend blasphemy by them ; frequently those who use more directly the name of God in vain mean nothing by their imprecation. — *Abbott*. The fact that men swear without thinking is so far from being an excuse, that it shows how deeply the sin is inwrought into their natures, how habitual it is. It is no longer merely an act of sin, but a nature of sin, which is far worse. — *P.*

37. But let your communication — "your word," in ordinary intercourse — be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay. "Let a simple *Yes* and *No* suffice, in affirming the truth or the untruth of any thing" (see Jas. 5 : 12, and 2 Cor. 1 : 17, 18). — *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. Cometh of evil. The word here translated "evil," when coupled with the article as it is here, in the Greek though not in our version (*ὁ πονηρός*, the evil), sometimes stands for the evil one, i.e., Satan (Matt. 13 : 19. 1 John 2 : 13, 14), and is rendered the *wicked one*. This signification here would be in accordance with Jas. 3 : 6. In the other and more general sense, it is true that all swearing, genteel or otherwise, *comes of evil*, i.e., of an underlying consciousness that simple assertion is not enough, that our word is not to be trusted. If truth were perfect, there would be no occasion to emphasize our assertions by such appeals ; and in point of fact, falsehood and profanity generally are close companions. — *Abbott*. See Illustrative, No. I.

38. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The law of retaliation (Exod. 21 : 24) was a judicial rule, righteous in itself, and especially necessary in the East. Introduced to do away with the private revenge, so common in the time of Moses (intended to allay rather than to stimulate anger ; as a limit to vindictiveness, not a license. — *Augustine*), it had been perverted into a warrant for retaliation of every kind. Our Lord teaches that while this rule is correct in law, our personal conduct should be governed by a very different principle. — *Schaff*. The same principle, viz., that the punishment should be *as* the offence, and determined by it, is found in the laws of Solon of Greece, in the laws of the twelve tables of Rome, and others. On the other hand, the laws of Draco (7th century B.C.), punished every crime, even petty theft and idleness, with death ; and those of England, A.D. 1600, 263 crimes in the same manner ; while those of Moses provided capital punishment but for 12 crimes. — *Abbott*. The Pharisees thought it no injustice nor irreligion to prosecute the severest retaliation or revenge ; so that at the same time their outward man might be a saint, and their inward man a devil. No care at all was had to curb the unruliness of anger, or the exorbitance of desire. Among all their sacrifices they never sacrificed so much as one lust. — *Robert South*.

39. Resist not evil. "Wrong," or "the evil man." The meaning and limitations of this are clearly perceived from its being an interpretation of ver. 38, and from the examples which follow. It refers to the revengeful spirit, and our personal dealings with men. It does not refer to efforts to stop the ravages of evil, by law, and by punishments, or efforts for the general good of the community, or defence against violence. But this is the Christian law in all personal matters, in injuries to ourselves. We are to overcome evil with good : we are not to revenge, not to retaliate, but to do good to our enemies. Even if they must be punished, it must be *for their good*. Smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other. Our Lord's own meek yet dignified bearing, when smitten rudely on the cheek (John 18 : 22, 23), and not literally presenting the other, is the best comment on these words. It is the preparedness after one indignity, not to invite but to submit meekly to another, without retaliation, which this strong language is meant to convey. — *J. F. and B.* The everlasting rule is, that thou render good for thy brother's evil ; the shape in which

smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also.

41. And whosoever shall¹ compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42.² Give to him that asketh thee,³ and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

¹ Chap. 28: 32. Mark 15: 21. ² Prov. 21: 26. ³ Deut. 15: 8, 10. Ps. 37: 26. Luke 6: 34, 45.

thou shalt render it, *love* shall prescribe. — *Trench.* Christian love must make us bear twice as much as the world, in its injustice, could demand. — *Schaff.*

40. Sue thee, take away (i.e., in pledge for a debt, see Exod. 22: 36), *thy coat* . . . have *thy cloak*. This verse may be thus rendered: "If any man desires to go to law with thee, and (by so doing) to take away thy coat (the inner garment or tunic), let thy cloak (the more expensive upper garment) also go to him." The "cloak" was frequently used as a covering at night, and according to the Mosaic law (Exod. 20: 26, 29) could not be retained as a pledge over night. Rather give up even what the law cannot seize, than cherish a vindictive spirit. Christians ought not to be those "desiring to go to law." Such often harbor vengeance while they speak of justice. — *Schaff.* It is noticeable that the tendency of Christianity has been, first, to lessen personal resistance to evil, and, second, to discourage lawsuits; and, while the commentators have difficulty with this passage, Christian lawyers constantly advise their clients, *as matter of worldly wisdom*, to submit to almost any injustice rather than to involve themselves in a lawsuit. So far has this conviction gone, that the abolition of all laws for the collection of debt, except in cases of fraud, is seriously considered by able jurists in this country. — *Abbott.* To go to law is for two persons to kindle a fire at their own cost to warm others, and singe themselves to cinders. — *Bentham.*

41. Compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. We learn from coins and inscriptions that the couriers in the service of the Roman government had the privilege of travelling through the provinces free of expense, and of calling on the villagers to forward their carriages and baggage to the next town. Under a despotic government this became a cruel grievance. Every Roman of high rank claimed the same privilege: the horses were yoked from the plough to be harnessed to the rich man's carriage. It was the most galling injustice which the provinces suffered. Our Lord could give no stronger exhortation to patient humility than by advising his Syrian hearers, instead of resenting the demand for one stage's "vehiculation," to go willingly a second time. — *Eclectic Review.* The thing demanded is a readiness to submit to unreasonable demands of whatever kind, rather than raise quarrels, with all the evils resulting from them. — *J. F. and B.*

42. Give to him that asketh thee. That which the words really teach as the ideal of the perfect life which we ought to aim at is the loving and the giving temper, which sees in every request made to us the expression of a want of some kind, which we are to consider as a call to thoughtful inquiry how best to meet the want, giving what is asked for if we honestly believe that it is really for the good of him who asks, giving something else if that would seem to be really better for him. Rightly understood, the words do not bid us idly give alms to the idle or the impostor; and St. Paul's rule, "If a man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3: 10), is not a departure from the law of Christ, but its truest application and fulfilment. — *Ellicott.* From him that would borrow of thee. Be ready and glad to lend a helping hand to all within your reach. Do not try to escape being asked. The joy of the Christian's life is to give, and to help all the people he can in all the ways he can. — *P.* The force of the precept depends on its connection with the Jewish law, which forbade not only what we call usury, i.e., excessive interest, but all interest on loans where debtor and creditor alike were Israelites (Exod. 22: 25. Lev. 25: 37). Cases where the business of the world calls for loans, *not for the relief of want*, but as a matter of *commercial convenience*, lie obviously outside the range of the precept. — *Ellicott.* In considering the significance of this entire passage respecting retaliation, it is to be remembered (1) that Christ, throughout this sermon, inculcates principles for the government of the individual, not of the community; and that, therefore, it does not affect, except indirectly, the right or duty of the community to use force in protecting itself or its members from evil. (2) That it does not affect the question of the right of the community to overturn a tyrannical government, and substitute another and more just in its stead. (3) That it does not necessarily deny the right or duty of one to use force, if need be, in defending others intrusted to his protection, as the husband his wife, or the father his child. (4) That it inculcates the spirit in which the disciple of Christ is to receive injuries personal to himself. — *Abbott.*

43. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said,¹ Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.²

44. But I say unto you,³ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,⁴ and

pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ;

45. ⁵That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and ⁶send-

¹ Lev. 19: 18. ² Comp. Deut. 23: 6. ³ Luke 6: 27. ⁴ Luke 23: 34. Acts 7: 60. ⁵ Luke 6: 35. ⁶ Acts 14: 17.

43. Thou shalt love thy neighbor. (See Lev. 19 : 18.) The original precept referred to Israelites, and obedience to it helped to keep them distinct from other nations. But the Pharisees, to increase the distance between the Jews and Gentiles, added the converse precept, and hate thine enemy, meaning by "enemy" the Gentiles (comp. Deut. 23 : 6). Latin authors speak of this as a distinctive feature of the Jewish character. Personal hatred also was probably justified by this assumed meaning of the words of Moses. Our Lord ("a light to lighten the Gentiles") opposes this interpretation. (Whom he meant by "neighbor," we learn from Luke 10 : 27, f.f.)—*Schaff*.

44. Love your enemies. A law of the heart, not of conduct merely. It means more than bless, do good, pray for ; it is interpreted by God's love for us when we were yet enemies ; and it is quite consistent with the utmost abhorrence of their wrong-doing, from which by love we seek to redeem them.—*Abbott*. It is the great duty of Christians to love their enemies. We must commend that which is amiable, even in our enemies. We must have compassion for them and good-will toward them. We must answer their revilings with courtesy.—*Henry*. We are not required to regard with precisely the same feeling a Christian brother and an openly profane and profligate person, a generous benefactor and a malignant inveterate enemy. It is not possible to cherish the same tender regard for strangers as for "those of our own household," the same gratitude to enemies as to benefactors, the same esteem for the bad as for the good ; but we are sincerely to wish all men well, even our enemies : we are to desire their good ; we are, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness.—*J. Brown*. Love as God loves, regardless of merit and of the reciprocity of love ; loving because you would be like God, loving because God has first loved you.—*Vaughn*. This precept alone is a sufficient proof of the holiness of the gospel, and of the truth of the Christian religion.—*Quesnel*. Bless them that curse you. Seek God's blessing on those who call down upon you God's curses.—*Abbott*. Do good to them that hate you. (A better proof of love than good words.) Do good to their bodies, estates, names, families, and especially to their souls. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, that the way to make him a friend was to do him an ill turn ; so many did he serve who had disoblged him.—*Henry*. Pray for them that despitefully use you. "Despitefully" means malignant hatred, violent angry malice. Circumstances may preclude acts which would be rejected, and words that would be met with scorn ; but the prayer that they, too, may be delivered from the evil which has been their curse is always in our power, and in so praying we are drawing near to the mind of God, and asking that our wills may be as his.—*Ellicott*. The best commentary on these matchless counsels is the bright example of Him who gave them. (See 1 Pet. 2 : 21-24 ; and cf. Rom. 12 : 20, 21. 1 Cor. 4 : 12. 1 Pet. 3 : 9.) But though such precepts were never before expressed—perhaps not even conceived—With such breadth, precision, and sharpness as here, our Lord is here only the incomparable Interpreter of a law in force from the beginning ; and this is the only satisfactory view of the entire strain of this discourse.—*J. F. and B.*

45. Ye may be the children of your Father in heaven. Because like him in character and in actions, and hence will be like him in joy.—*Barnes*. Such action proves, not makes, the sonship.—*Schaff*. The more we lift ourselves above the world's view of the duty and expediency of revenge and exclusive dealing, into the mind with which the righteous Judge, strong and patient, who is provoked every day, yet does good to the unthankful and evil, the more firmly shall we assure, and the more nobly illustrate, our place as sons in his family, as having entered into the kingdom of heaven.—*Alford*. One chief feature of the teaching in the Gospels is found in the word *Father*. Jesus appears among men in the character of the Son. His first spoken word utters the consciousness of that relation. The whole course of his teaching tends to the intertwining of his own relation to God with that of his disciples, which is finally expressed on the eve of his departure : "My Father and your Father, my God and your God."—*T. D. Bernard, D.D.* Maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good ; whose love of benevolence is universal and

eth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46. ¹For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47. And if ye salute your brethren

only, what do ye more ^othan others? do not even the publicans so?

48. Be ²ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

¹ Luke 6: 32. ² Gen. 6: 9. Chap. 19: 21. 1 Cor. 2: 6. Phil. 3: 15. Col. 1: 28; 4: 12. Jas. 1: 4; 3: 2.

not measured by the desert of the persons on whom he showers his providential favors. Christ here teaches the power and providence of God in nature, as well as his character of love.—*Schaff*. Sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Not lightly was that emblem chosen to express the impartial goodness of heaven, the emblem of the falling rain, which—like all the good gifts of nature, and unlike man—judges none, but descends for the slave and for his tyrant; for the strong and for the weak; for him with many fields, and for him with one; for man and for beast, sublimely indifferent except to benefit all.—*Daily Telegraph*. He imparts to all alike, but all do not receive alike: men may sit in darkness in spite of the sun, or suffer hunger for idleness in spite of the rain, or become lost souls in spite of God's love that would save all.

46. Publicans. This race of men, so frequently mentioned as the objects of hatred and contempt among the Jews, and coupled with sinners, were not properly the *publicans*, who were wealthy Romans, of the rank of knights, farming the revenues of the provinces; but their *underlings*, heathens or renegade Jews, who usually exacted with recklessness and cruelty. "The Talmud classes them with thieves and assassins, and regards their repentance as impossible." In interpreting these verses we must carefully give the persons spoken of their correlative value and meaning: *ye*, Christians, sons of God, these "*publicans*," or "*Gentiles*," men of this world, actuated by worldly motives,—what thank have *ye* in being like *them*?—*Alford*.

47. If ye salute your brethren only. The prominence of salutation in the social life of the East gives a special vividness to this precept. To utter the formal "Peace be with you," to follow that up with manifold compliments and wishes, was to recognize those whom men saluted as friends and brothers. But this the very heathen did (*heathen*, rather than *publicans*, being the true reading): were the followers of Christ to be content with copying heathen customs?—*Alford*. Christians must do to *all*, to enemies, to the worst of men, what the heathen did to their friends. Superior conduct will prove the superior religion. What do ye more than others? I. *Disciples have to do more than others*—I. Maintain the Christian life; 2. Extend the cause of Christ. II. *They are able to do more than others*—I. They are in alliance with God; 2. They have more light and knowledge; 3. They have more moral power. III. *More expected of them than of others*—I. By their Saviour; 2. By the world; 3. By their own consciences.—*Biblical Museum*.

48. Be ye therefore perfect. Rather, *complete*. The first reference is to completeness in love to others; to an all-embracing, instead of a narrow, exclusive affection.—*Schaff*. The word *perfect* never signifies in New-Testament usage sinlessness, but completion in Christian character; in contrast with a half-finished and partial character,—a character that is Christian in some parts and worldly and selfish in others. "The ancient statutes," says Christ in effect, "forbade murder, adultery, false swearing, cruelty in revenge. A complete obedience embraces the whole man, and brings the spirit as well as the members under allegiance to these laws. The ancient statute commanded love to your neighbor: the spirit of that statute requires love to all mankind. In brief, one may be an imperfect, but one cannot be a partial, Christian. He may obey Christ imperfectly, but he cannot obey in part and disobey in part. God requires perfection of his disciples as the wise teacher continually holds perfection before his pupils; not condemning those who fall short (see Rom. 8: 1), but not allowing them to rest satisfied with incomplete attainment.—*Abbott*. To be *perfect* is simply the sum of the commandments and of all duty. Christ could not teach his disciples that they could leave any part of it out.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Tract, by American Tract Society, "The Swearer's Prayer." On verses 38-46 there are some capital illustrations, too long to quote here, in "Arvine's Religious Anecdotes," No. 159 (f), "William Ladd and his Neighbor;" and 160 (h), "A Christian Colony," by Mrs. Lydia Maria Child. Sermons by Robert Hall, and N. Emmons, on swearing. On

love to enemies, see sermons by Emmons, South, Tillotson, Massillon. On vers. 46, 47, doing more than others, see Secker's "Nonesuch Professor." On verse 48, Robertson's sermons, Series 3.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Profanity. Ver. 37. Men always lose faith in that which they take lightly on their tongues. And this is the reason why God holds up the Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This is the deadly nature of profanity. Because to take God's name in vain is to raise up an army of doubts. Oaths are like the dragons' teeth sown by Cadmus of old : from them spring a harvest of armed giants of doubt and unbelief. There is no possible way in which you can more make God seem a myth, an unreality, and destroy his power over men, than by taking his name lightly on the lips.—*P. in sermon on Faith.*

II. Revenge hurts both offerer and sufferer ; as we see in a bee which in her anger loseth her sting, and lives a drone ever after.—*Bishop Hall.*

III. Love your enemies.—It is recorded of a Chinese emperor, that on being apprised of his enemies having raised an insurrection in one of the distant provinces, he said to his officers, "Come follow me, and we will quickly *destroy* them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. "How!" cried the first minister, "is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed; and, behold, you have pardoned them all, and even confessed some of them!"—"I promised," replied the emperor, with a generous air, "to destroy my enemies; I have fulfilled my word, for, see, they are *enemies* no longer; I have made *friends* of them."—*British Workman.*

PRACTICAL.

1. The morality of Christ is not less strict, but more strict, than that of the law.
2. Vers. 33-37. Profanity is the most useless and ill paid of all sins.
3. Profanity is the tribute which Satan's servants pay to their master, the profession of their allegiance.
4. Profanity is as vulgar as it is wicked, a cowardly, ungentlemanly vice.
5. All light and trivial speaking of God and sacred things is a very great evil, and destroys the power of sacred things over the soul.
6. The simple assertion of a good man is worth more than the oaths of a world of bad men.
7. There is a sociality in sins, they seldom dwell alone : swearing goes naturally with other vices.
8. Vers. 38-41. The only power that can overcome evil is good. (Rom. 12 : 19-21.)
9. To fight evil with evil makes two evils instead of one, and cures none.
10. Ver. 42. The desire of the Christian is always to *give*, to help, to lend, to make others happy.
11. Ver. 44. It is easy to love those who love us, or to think we do. The *proof* of love is to love where it is hard to love ; to love enemies, the unthankful, the unworthy.
12. Ver. 45. God's children must be like him. There is no other *proof* that we are his children.
13. God gives many things to all alike, but men do not use them alike : they can raise thistles or wheat, thorns or flowers, with his rain, and do deeds of love or hate in his sunshine.
14. Ver. 47. Christians ought to do more than others. 1. They have received more. 2. They profess more. 3. They expect more. 4. They are more.—*Secker's Nonesuch Professor.*
15. The religion that makes its disciples best is the best.
16. Ver. 48. Every true Christian longs and strives to be perfect, or he is not a Christian at all.

LESSON VIII. — FEBRUARY 22, 1880.

GIVING AND PRAYING. — MATT. 6 : 1-13.

TIME.—In the summer of A.D. 28, near the middle of our Lord's ministry.

PLACE.—The Mount of Beatitudes, or Horns of Hattin, about the centre of the west coast of the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, of Galilee.

INTRODUCTION.

In these verses Christ draws a broad and palpable line of distinction between the *seeming* and the real in religion. The portraits of the mere pretenders, and the genuinely good, are here sketched by the hand of *Infallibility* itself: every line, feature, and hue is true to life. Mark their points of agreement, and their points of contrast.

I. THEIR POINTS OF AGREEMENT.—Not in motive or spirit, but exclusively in features of external conduct. *Christ intimates that both give, that both pray, that both fast, that both are rewarded.*

II. THEIR POINTS OF DISSIMILARITY.—*The religion of the one derives its motives from man, that of the other from God.*—David Thomas, D.D., *Genius of the Gospels*. The three leading manifestations of practical piety are here given: *almsgiving* (vers. 2-4), *prayer* (vers. 5-15), and *fasting* (vers. 17, 18), as performed by hypocrites and by the subjects of Christ's kingdom.—Schaff. The Pharisees imagined that they had reached the highest eminence in these three phases of spiritual life; while their spirit of bondage and hypocrisy entirely destroyed the spiritual character of these works, and morally placed them on a level with the saddest and most sinful perversions of the heathen.—Lange.

1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they

Religious duties being only for showing the earthly world
the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets
EXPLANATORY.

1. Take heed. For the danger of ostentation in religion is one that must be watched against, one that easily ensnares the unwary disciple.—Abbott. That ye do not your alms. The better MSS. give *righteousness*, and obviously with a far truer meaning, as the wider word which branches off afterwards into the three heads of alms, fasting, prayer. The Greek version of the LXX. often renders the Hebrew word for *righteousness* by "alms."—Ellicott. Righteousness is upright and pious conduct generally, which this first verse describes, and which is followed by a statement of the threefold manifestation of that righteousness.—Lange. Before men, to be seen of them. The one radical perversion of religious life consists in the desire to appear before men.—Lange. It is the motive, and not the fact of publicity, that vitiates the action. The high ideal of the disciple of Christ is to let his light shine "before men" (the self-same words are used in Matt. 5: 16, as here), and yet to be indifferent to their praise or even their opinion.—Ellicott. A man may do his good deeds before men, but not in order to be seen by them; and a man may do them not before men, but in order to be seen by them.—Chrysostom. Otherwise (or else), i.e., if your object is human applause. No reward of your Father. Not, no reward, but no reward from God. They who do righteousness for public applause receive public applause, i.e., the very reward for which they strive. (Sometimes they do.—P.)—Abbott. The act is not done to and for him, and therefore (speaking after the manner of men) he looks on it as having no claim to payment.—Ellicott.

2. When thou doest thine alms. Alms here means acts of kindness to the poor,—the giving of money, food, clothing, or any such supply to the destitute. The history of the word "alms" is singularly interesting. In the original meaning of the Greek it was the quality of mercy. The practice of the Hellenistic Jews limited the word (*eleemosyna*) to money-gifts. It passed with this meaning into the European languages, in various forms, "aumone," "almose," and at last the word of six syllables and rich fulness of meaning contracts and collapses into our modern English "alms."—Ellicott. Almsgiving is abundantly enforced as a religious duty both in the Old and the New Testaments.—Abbott. Whilst you cannot argue the genuineness of a man's religion from the fact of his almsgiving, because the hypocrite gives "alms," you can argue the worthlessness of a man's religion from the neglect of his almsgiving.—Thomas. Do not sound a trumpet. Many commentators think that these words are to be taken literally, and that the Pharisees gathered the poor together by sounding a trumpet. Others connect it with the modern custom of beggars in the East, who blow the trumpet before the person from whom they expect help. It means simply, Do not call attention in any way to your gifts. A trumpet was sounded

for 2. Do not call attention 56

may have glory of men. ¹ Verily I say unto you, ² They have their reward.

3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4. That thine alms may be in secret: ³ and thy Father which seeth in

secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5. ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

¹ Verses 6, 16. ² Luke 6: 24. ³ Verses 6, 18.

before official personages to call attention to them; hence self-laudation and display are meant. — *Schaff*. Hypocrites, pretenders, dissemblers, false characters. The term was first used for *stage actors*, who often wore masks, and whose business it was to act a false part, to assume the character of another, and counterfeit his conduct. — *Jacobus*. In the synagogues . . . in the streets. Synagogues were the Jewish churches. Alms were specially distributed in the synagogues or places of religious concourse. The poor would flock there, naturally hoping for charities from the good. In the apostles' time collections for the poor and needy formed part of the worship on the sabbath. The streets, also, at the corners, and where roads met, served as a resort; and there, amongst the crowd, the utmost ostentation was shown by the proud and heartless donors. — *Jacobus*. They have their reward. The reputation of being charitable; and, as this applause was *all* they wished, there is of course no further reward to be looked for or obtained. — *Barnes*.

3. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. Simply a pithy enforcement of the doctrine. Compare with it the Eastern proverb, "If thou doest any good, cast it into the sea: if the fish shall not know it, the Lord knows it;" or the rabbinical maxim, "He who gives in secret is greater than Moses himself;" or the saying of Dryden, "The secret pleasure of a generous act is the great man's great bribe." For illustration of this precept, see Ruth 2: 15-17. — *Abbott*. But when thou (a child of God) doest alms. Let it not be with ostentation, but keep it rather, so far at least as the act of giving will admit, a secret from the world. — *Stier*.

4. That. "In order that." The mode should be chosen with a view to secrecy. In secret. More than "secretly." Literally, "In the hidden" (place). — *Schaff*. Here again we have a principle, rather than a rule. Publicity may be a duty (but *seeking* publicity never is), especially in public work. But this — gifts for schools, hospitals, and the like — is hardly contemplated in the word "alms," which refers rather to acts of mercy, to cases of individual suffering. — *Ellicott*. Thy Father which seeth in secret. Or, who is ever present, and knows all. Shall reward thee. The terms differ from those applied to the hypocrites. The idea there is of *hire*: the hypocrites have received that for which they worked. God *gives* this reward, "of grace, not of works." — *Schaff*. It is not a money reward, but a nobler spirit, a higher life, a more peaceful conscience, a becoming more consciously the child of God; and this will appear *openly*. Openly. This is omitted in some MSS. and ancient versions, and *Ellicott* says "that the addition weakens and lowers the force of the truth asserted." It is not necessarily in this way, "openly," that God rewards his servants, nor do the words point only to the reward of the last great day. The reward is at once immediate, and, it may be, secret, — the hidden manna, the joy with which a stranger doth not intermeddle, and which no man taketh from us. — *Ellicott*.

5. When thou prayest. The same rule is now applied to prayer, which from its very nature is addressed to God, not man; so that whoever acts as if the latter were the case thereby proves himself a hypocrite, a mere performer, one who acts the part of a true worshipper of God, but in his heart is courting the applause of man. *When thou prayest*; assuming that they would pray, and must pray, not merely in obedience to a positive command, nor even as a necessary means of spiritual growth, but as a vital function of the new life, which can no more be dispensed with, than the body can live without breath or without blood. — *Alexander*. Standing in the synagogues. The Jewish custom, more or less prevalent throughout the East, and for a time retained at certain seasons in the Christian Church, was to pray standing, with outstretched, uplifted hands, and there was nothing in the attitude as such that made it an act of ostentatious devotion; nor would there have been any ostentation in thus joining in the common prayer of the congregation assembled in the synagogue. What our Lord's words point to was the custom of going into the synagogue, as men go now into the churches of Latin Christendom, to offer private devotion (as, e.g., in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican), and of doing this so as to

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter¹ into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard² for their much speaking.³

8. Be not ye therefore like unto them:⁴ for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

¹ Isa. 26: 20. ² Comp. 1 Kings 18: 26, 29. ³ Eccl. 5: 2. ⁴ Ver. 32.

attract notice, the worshipper standing apart as if absorbed in prayer, while secretly glancing round to watch the impression which he might be making on others who were looking on. — *Ellicott*. In the corners of the streets—in the broad ways. The word here used is not that found in ver. 2. The hypocrites would purposely be in such conspicuous places at the fixed hours of prayer. The fashion of airing piety in this way has not died out. — *Schaff*.

6. Enter into thy closet; i.e., a place of retirement. The little room on the housetop of an Eastern dwelling, used for such purposes. "Thy" implies that the place is one where the person can secure privacy. — *Schaff*. The whole gist of the caution is in the words, "*that they may be seen of men*." If one makes an ostentation of his secret prayer, he violates the spirit of this law: if he prays in public places, but in secrecy of heart and feeling, he obeys its spirit. — *Abbott*. Reward thee openly. The holy life, the lovely spirit, the good deeds, the answers to prayer, will prove to the world that you have secret communion with God.

7. Use not vain repetitions. The original word literally means to *stammer*; hence, to repeat often the same word or syllable, after the manner of a stammerer. The precept is directed against the superstitious repetition of a mechanical form in the hope of being better heard by God, which is the point of Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18: 27). Our Lord's own example sanctions the earnest use both of long and of repeated prayers. (See Luke 6: 12. Matt. 26: 44.) — *Cook*. The heathen; i.e., the individual Gentiles. The same usage prevails largely among the adherents of all false religions. — *Schaff*. For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. This notion is but one form of the wide-spread heathen error, which has also found its way into the Christian world, that religion, and especially that prayer or worship, is rather a *magical charm* than a rational or reasonable service, and that its effect will bear proportion to the quantity, and hence the value of mere repetition. It has often been remarked that in corrupted Christian churches one of the earliest and worst perversions of the truth is the adoption of the very error which our Lord here describes as heathenish. — *Alexander*. Any mere *saying of prayers*, in distinction from praying from the heart, is here forbidden.

8. Be not ye therefore like unto them. *Be not like them*, is in Greek still stronger from the passive form and meaning of the verb, *be not likened* (or assimilated) to them, i.e., by your own act, or by voluntarily following their example. — *Alexander*. For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of. Our prayers do not tell "our Father" of our needs, but simply confess our consciousness of them, and our trust that he can and will supply them. Both of these feelings must precede answer to prayer. Hence the reason holds good against vain repetitions, not against childlike petitions. — *Schaff*. *Why, then, pray?* Because God wills it (Ezek. 36: 37); it forms in *us* the wish, it prepares us to receive what he is willing to grant; it strengthens us, because it brings us into communion with Him who is our strength; it is due to him, as well as needed by ourselves. — *Abbott*. Prayer is the great means of communion with God. Most of our acquaintance with persons is through mutual needs, or mutual objects for consultation. One hour of deep need, or one single great end to be sought for together, will give more real acquaintance than years of mere seeing one another. So our needs are satisfied, and our duties done through prayer, that so we may become acquainted with God. It is Jacob's ladder to God. — *P*. Prayer is the preparation and the enlargement of the heart for the receiving of the divine gift; which, indeed, God is always prepared to give, but we are not always prepared to receive. — *Trench*. Prayer is not designed to inform God, but to give man a sight of his misery, to humble his heart, to excite his desire, to inflame his faith, to animate his hope, to raise his soul toward heaven, and to put him in mind that there is his Father, his country, his inheritance. — *Quesnel*.

There has been given us 1058 not as a means
there is the essence of evil but as a means when we
become strong in faith it is a means a means in
most into him since from the new breathing him

9. ¹After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, ²Hallowed be thy name.

10. ³Thy kingdom come. ⁴Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

¹ Luke 11: 2-4. ² Isa. 29: 23. Comp. 1 Pet. 3: 15. ³ Comp. chap. 4: 17. ⁴ Chap. 26: 42. Luke 22: 42. Acts 21: 14.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. — The literature upon this prayer would of itself make a library. For eighteen centuries the Christian Church has been studying it. — *Abbott*.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye. A pattern or specimen of the true form of Christian prayer is given: hence other prayers are not only allowed, but required. Two forms of this prayer exist (see Luke 11: 2-4). — *Schaff*. In this prayer our Lord shows his disciples how an infinite variety of wants and requests can be compressed into a few humble petitions. It embodies every possible desire of a praying heart, a whole world of spiritual requirements; yet all in the most simple, condensed, and humble form, resembling, in this respect, a pearl on which the light of heaven plays. — *Lange*. This prayer contains four great general sentiments, which constitute the very soul of religion, — sentiments which are the germs of all holy deeds in all worlds. First, *Filial reverence*. God is addressed not as the great unknown, not as the unsearchable governor, but as a father, the most intelligible, attractive, and transforming name. Secondly, *Divine loyalty*. "Thy kingdom come." Thirdly, *Conscious dependence*. "Give us this day," &c. Fourthly, *Unbounded confidence*. "For thine is the power," &c. — *Dr. Thomas's Genius of the Gospels*. Our. The prayer is a fraternal one. He saith not, My Father, as if praying for himself only, but Our Father, as embracing in one prayer all who are known as brethren in Christ. — *Augustine*. Our Father. This was a form of address almost unknown to the old covenant, now and then hinted at, as reminding the children of their rebellion (Isa. 1: 2. Mal. 1: 6), or mentioned as a last resource of the orphan and desolate creature (Isa. 63: 16); but never brought out in its fulness, as indeed it could not be, till He was come by whom we have received the adoption of sons. — *Alford*. Nowhere in literature, outside of the Bible, and that which has been inspired by the Bible, is to be found a recognition of the truth that the relation of a father to his child, and the government of a father over his child, that is, the government of a personal, providing, sympathizing love, is the best symbol for the interpretation of the relations between God and man. — *Abbott*. The very preface to the Lord's Prayer is a denial of Atheism, Pantheism, and Deism, since it recognizes a God, a personal God, who is our Father through Christ. — *Schaff*. Let any one who wishes to contrast modern philosophy and the religion of Jesus essay a prayer to "the Inscrutable Power," or "the Infinite," or "the Ultimate Cause," or the "Unconditional," the common appellations which rationalism employs. — *Abbott*. Thus our text gives us God for Father, man for brother, heaven for character. Thus, too, in these three words, Our Heavenly Father, is infolded all theology and all practice. — *Boardman*. Which art in heaven. If the Father is heavenly, so let man, his child, be. — *Boardman*. No closeness of relationship with God brings him down to our level. He remains far above us; "our Father" indeed, but "our Father in heaven." — *Tulloch*. Hallowed be thy name. The name of God is God himself as made known to men. — *Boardman*. "Hallowed" means made holy. In this case it can only mean recognized, treated as sacred, and thus glorified. — *Schaff*. The first expression of thought in the pattern prayer is not the utterance of our wants and wishes, but that the name of God — that which sums up all our thoughts of God — should be "hallowed;" be to us and all men as a consecrated name, not lightly used in trivial speech, or rash assertion, or bitterness of debate, but the object of awe and love and adoration. — *Ellicott*.

10. Thy kingdom come. The word *kingdom* here means *reign*. The petition is the expression of a wish that God may *reign* everywhere; that his laws may be obeyed; and especially that the gospel of Christ may be advanced everywhere, till the world shall be filled with his glory. — *Barnes*. How can we sincerely offer this petition if we are not working and giving to help on the coming of that kingdom? — *P*. Thy will be done in earth. His will respecting us, in God's providential dealings (Luke 22: 42. Acts 21: 14); by us, in our daily life (John 6: 38; 17: 18. Eph. 6: 6); in us, by the conformity of our character to the divine image (John 17: 23. Rom. 12: 2). Observe that this is much more than a mere submission to the will of God. It is the expression of the pre-eminent desire of our souls that God's will, not our own, may be accomplished, and that ours may be made subject to it. — *Abbott*. As it is in heaven. The inhabitants of heaven do the will of God universally, perfectly, harmoniously, and with ineffable delight. We are taught to pray, that all mankind may imitate their example; that the whole race of men,

that was the true religion 59. — *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* — *own wish, you have not instead the comprehension of knowing, that the best possible — that you*

test for all - will be accomplished -
we can hope for forgiveness from God only as we
cherish a forgiving spirit toward others -

11. ¹Give us this day our daily bread.

12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13. And ²lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

¹ Prov. 30: 8. ² Chap. 26: 41. Mark 14: 38. Luke 22: 40, 46.

becoming subjects of Christ, may renounce all sin and wickedness, and obey God's commands as the angels obey them. What a change this would be! What an extensive petition! — *Scott*.

11. Give us this day our daily bread. The word *daily*, though not an exact translation, probably expresses, as nearly as any single word can, the sense. — *Cook*. "Bread," food in general: the form in the Greek hints that it is "ours," i.e., created for our use; "this day" shows that we are to pray daily, and to ask neither for riches nor poverty, but, with contentment and thankfulness, for the day's portion only. — *Schaff*. This petition is our warrant for carrying to God our *physical* wants. We are taught to pray for just so much bread as is necessary day by day, for our sustenance, leaving all the future in God's hands. — *Abbott*. Not the bread of idleness, nor of violence, nor of deceit; but *our* bread, coming down to us like manna from heaven, yet gathered by our own diligence in a business in whose minutest details we are not ashamed to ask God to prosper us. — *H. J. Van Dyke, D.D.* The millionaire must offer this prayer, not less than the pauper. Money is as powerless against flood and drought, frost and fire, rot and grub, as Pharaoh was against fog and fly, locust and darkness. The first lesson here is *dependence* on God for every blessing. The second lesson is *trustfulness* (*give this day*). A third lesson is *brotherhood* (*our*). Fourth lesson, *simplicity* of life (*daily bread*). — *Boardman*. It includes supplies of spiritual food, — food for the hungry heart, food for the mind, food from heaven for the soul. Of what use is earthly food without the heavenly? — *P*.

12. Forgive us our debts. *Two parts*, 1st, a prayer for forgiveness; 2d, a standard of forgiveness. — *Boardman*. In Luke another word is used, which reads "trespasses." That is here the meaning (see ver. 14). The Scriptures often speak of sin in this light. Trespasses, or sins, are debts. Sinners are debtors. They owe God vast amounts of love and service, which they have never paid him, and never can pay. To forgive a debt is to free the debtor from payment, and blot out the charges against him. God forgives the debts or sins of his people, by blotting them out, and not *remembering against them their iniquities*, of which they repent. — *Jacobus*. Give and forgive. Such needs to be our perpetual appeal to Heaven, long as we remain upon the earth. The one is a cry of want, and the other of guilt. — *Wm. R. Williams*. Every human being is a double debtor: first he owes a life of sonship; and secondly he owes the making good wherein he has failed in sonship. No man can do more than his duty, and hence no man can ever pay the debt of a single failure in duty. He can only say, Father, forgive. But this forgiveness does not go into practical effect, until it is freely accepted by the debtor: only believe. — *Boardman*. As we forgive our debtors. The condition and the standard of forgiveness. We must be able to say, as it reads in Luke, "for we also forgive." Our forgiving others will not, of itself, save us; no virtue can atone, and no worship is acceptable with hatred or ill-will in our hearts, or wilful quarrels with others (ver. 23), and no prayer for forgiveness need be offered unless we are ready to forgive. — *Jacobus*. How terrible may this prayer become to us if we be unforgiving! — *Augustine*.

13. Lead us not into temptation. To tempt means to try, to make trial of, to test, to prove. It may be used in a good sense, as well as a bad, — putting to trial, or soliciting to sin. All life is a temptation, a probation; this is the meaning of life. This is a prayer of genuine humility and distrust, entreating God to spare us exposure to extraordinary trials. — *Boardman*. He that willingly enters into temptation is already more than half fallen. — *P*. God cannot tempt us (Jas. 1: 13), i.e., solicit us to evil, but "temptation" means also a trial of our moral character; these trials are under God's control, and his Providence may lead us into them, may even *permit* us to be solicited by evil. This petition asks to be preserved from these, and, by implication, to be shown a way of escape. — *Schaff*. But deliver us. Literally, pull out, draw to thyself. From the evil. Either from all evil, or from the evil one, as the author of all evil, who tempts us. Temptation itself, when endured safely by God's grace, is a means of delivering us from temptation, gives us power to resist and overcome. There are no temptations so great, but God's grace is able to give us the victory over them. — *P*. For. Here is the reason why God can answer all this prayer; why we can come to him in confidence. Thine. Belonging to

thee, as thy right and as thy actual possession. The kingdom. The right to reign, and actual dominion. The power. The ability to answer these petitions and to grant these gifts, implying absolute omnipotence. Glory. The acknowledgment or recognition of inherent excellence. If the Lord saves us, and answers us, the praise shall be his. Forever; literally, *to the ages*. Denoting infinite duration.—*Alexander*. Amen. This is a word of Hebrew origin, from a verb signifying *to be firm, secure, to be true and faithful*. It is a word expressing consent or strong approbation, a word of strong asseveration. It means *verily, certainly, so be it*. It may be proper to remark that this doxology, “for thine is the kingdom,” &c., is wanting in many manuscripts, and that its authenticity is doubtful.—*Barnes*. “This prayer, as indeed every prayer, is a letter from earth to heaven. Here is the inscription, *Our Father*; the place, *in heaven*; the contents, in the several errands; the close, *for thine is the kingdom*; the seal, *Amen*; and, if you will, the date too, *this day*.”—*Matthew Henry*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

There are many volumes on the Lord's Prayer. George D. Boardman's, “The Model Prayer,” is one of the latest. Professor Phelps's “Still Hour” is excellent on the general subject. Also Gardner Spring's and W. R. Williams's sermons on the Lord's Prayer.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. *Hypocrites. Judging the church by them.*—Spurgeon tells this story: “An American gentleman said to a friend, ‘I wish you would come down to my garden, and taste my apples.’ He asked him about a dozen times, but the friend did not come; and at last the fruit-grower said, ‘I suppose you think my apples are good for nothing, so you won't come and try them.’—‘Well, to tell the truth,’ said the friend, ‘I have tasted them. As I went along the road, I picked one up that fell over the wall, and I never tasted any thing so sour in all my life; and I do not particularly wish to have any more of your fruit.’—‘Oh,’ said the owner of the garden, ‘I thought it must be so. Those apples around the outside are for the special benefit of the boys. I went fifty miles to select the sourest sorts to plant all round the orchard, so the boys might give them up as not worth stealing; but, if you will come inside, you will find that we grow a very different quality there, sweet as honey.’” Those who judge the church by its worst members, those most like the world, make the same mistake.

II. *Praying without giving.*—We are told that the Lamas of Thibet have the following way of helping travellers who are in want of horses: They cut out a number of horses in paper, ascend a high mountain, pray, and fling up a lot of these paper horses in the air, and the wind carries them in all directions; and they suppose that Buddha then changes those paper horses into flesh and blood, and weary travellers get the use of them. So absurd are those who make formal prayers, and do not give and work for the object prayed for.

III. *Earnest prayer.*—Prayer pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly, and pulls continuously with all his might.—*Spurgeon*.

IV. *The Doxology.*—At the Evangelical Alliance, a French speaker said, “Some papers have said that our meetings were too complimentary; to which I would answer by a line of one of our French poets, addressing himself to Louis XIV.: ‘Great king, cease to win victories, and we shall cease to praise and to sing your glory.’” So we will never cease to give glory to God, so long as he continues to answer so abundantly our prayers.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 1-4. The goodness of good deeds depends on the motive with which they are done.
2. There are good men and true benevolence, in spite of some counterfeits.
3. Deeds with earthly motives cannot receive heavenly rewards.
4. True Christians do a great deal more good than they get credit for.
5. Vers. 5-7. Prayer is no magic or charm, but a real pouring-out of the heart.
6. Men gain not so much reward, but the *kind* of reward they seek.
7. Ver. 9. True prayer ever has the qualities of the Lord's Prayer.
8. Parents should so treat and train their children, that they may obtain a good idea of God's love, from a parent's love.
9. The first thought in prayer is always of God, and to honor him.

10. There is no real prayer for the coming of God's kingdom, that is not prayed by working and giving as well as the voice.
 11. God's will done on earth will change earth to heaven.
 12. Ver. 11. It is right to pray for our bodily wants, to bring all our daily needs to Christ.
 13. God supplies our present, but teaches us to trust for the future, and so feeds our souls at the same time with our bodies.
 14. Ver. 13. We can pray with the assurance of an answer, because God is so great and good and powerful.

LESSON IX. — FEB. 29, 1880.

OUR FATHER'S CARE. — MATT. 6: 24-34.

TIME. — The summer of A.D. 28.

PLACE. — The Mount of Beatitudes, near the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome, (15th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (3d year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (32d year); Herod Philip, of other parts, (32d year).

INTRODUCTION.

In verses 16-18, which follow the Lord's Prayer (included in our last lesson), Christ again lays down the doctrine of sincerity and simplicity in our religious devotions, and applies it to fasting, as he had done to alms and prayer. Vers. 19-21 teach that our treasures should be laid up in heaven, where our heart should be; vers. 22-24 enforce the duty of devoting our heart to God by two illustrations; vers. 25-32 apply this principle to earthly wants; ver. 33 states the principle plainly, while ver. 34 deduces from it the prohibition of anxious care for the future. The last verse returns, as it were, to the starting-point, since anxious care for the morrow leads to heaping up of treasures on earth. —

Schaff: "We are not our own but one is your master"

24. ¶¹ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. ¶² We cannot serve God and³ mammon.
 25. ¶ Therefore I say unto you,

from Christ

¹ Luke 16: 13. ² Luke 16: 9, 11. ³ Luke 12: 22-31.

EXPLANATORY.

24. No man can serve two masters. — Christ proceeds to illustrate the necessity of laying up treasures in heaven from a well-known fact, that a servant cannot serve two masters at the same time. His affections and obedience would be divided, and he would fail altogether in his duty to one or the other. To the interests of one he would adhere, the other he would neglect. This is a law of human nature. The supreme affections can be fixed on only one object. So, says Jesus, the servant of God cannot at the same time obey him and be avaricious, or seek treasures supremely on earth. One interferes with the other, and one will be and must be surrendered. — Barnes. Serve. Not merely "serve" as we now understand it, but in that closer sense in which he who serves is the slave of, i.e., belongs to and obeys entirely. — Alford. For either he will hate the one, and love the other. Hate and love must be given their full meaning, or the depth of the saying is not reached; the sense *love less, disparage*, for hate, would not bring out the opposition and division of the nature of man by the attempt. — Alford. The man who loves God cannot love the evil world, and, so far as it is evil, will learn to hate it. "The man who loves the world will, even in the midst of lip-homage, hate the service of God in his inmost heart. — Ellicott. Hold to, despise. There are natures which seem hardly susceptible of such strong emotions as love or hatred. In that case there will be a like, though not an identical, issue. The man's will will drift in one direction or another. He will cleave to one with such affection as he is capable of, and will hold the other cheap. — Ellicott. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. But you can serve God, and make mammon serve God and you. Mammon. The word means in Syriac "money" or "riches."

68. The man who loves God cannot love the evil world, and, so far as it is evil, will learn to hate it. The man who loves the world will, even in the midst of lip-homage, hate the service of God in his inmost heart. — Ellicott. Hold to, despise. There are natures which seem hardly susceptible of such strong emotions as love or hatred. In that case there will be a like, though not an identical, issue. The man's will will drift in one direction or another. He will cleave to one with such affection as he is capable of, and will hold the other cheap. — Ellicott. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. But you can serve God, and make mammon serve God and you. Mammon. The word means in Syriac "money" or "riches."

*Discreet and is not a person in
the anxious solicitude
the life which is your
instruct*

¹ Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall

put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. ² Behold the fowls of the air :

¹ Verses 27, 28, 31, 34. 1 Cor. 7 : 33, 34. Phil. 4 : 6. Comp. 1 Pet. 5 : 7. ² Comp. Job 38 : 41. Ps. 147 : 9.

and is used in this sense in Luke 16 : 9. There is no ground for believing that it ever became the name of any deity, who, like the Plutus of the Greeks, was worshipped as the god of wealth. Here there is obviously an approach to a personification for the sake of contrasting the service or worship of money with that which is due to God. Milton's description of Mammon among the fallen angels is a development of the same thought ("Paradise Lost," i. 678). — *Ellicott*. To have money and property is not sinful, provided it become not thy master, but remain thy servant, and thou its master. — *Luther*. Mammon is a jealous God : he must be supreme, "me only shalt thou serve." Mammon-worship is an exclusive worship, and mammon-worshippers at large have it brought home to them that they cannot serve God and mammon. — *Jacox*. God says, "Be content with such things as ye have : " Mammon says, "Grasp at all thou canst ; more money, by fair means or foul." God says, "Be honest : " Mammon says, "Cheat thine own father if thou canst gain by it." God says, "Be charitable : " Mammon says, "Hold thine own, this giving undoes all." God says, "Keep the sabbath : " Mammon says, "Make use of that day as well as any other, for the world." Thus we cannot serve both. — *Matthew Henry*. There is one point, and it is the point of motive, where the world's people and God's people divide. On one side, notions, feelings, acts, which might otherwise seem to be neutral, take a taint of evil from an ungodly bias of the life. On the other side, actions and feelings which might otherwise be indifferent are stamped as good, because the ruling affection, the radical intention of life, is right or Christian. So neutrality ends, and every least thing has one of two contradictory characteristic qualities. And so regeneration is both a philosophical and a Christian fact. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." — *F. D. Huntington, D.D.* Every one, it has often been said, has his ruling passion. That of the Christian must be the love of his Maker and Redeemer. This must principally occupy his thoughts, time, attention, and heart. If there be any thing else which has gained ascendancy over our souls, on which our desires, wishes, hopes, or fears are chiefly fixed, God is then dispossessed of his rightful dominion over us, we serve another master. — *Bishop Porteus*.

25. Therefore. A natural and almost unavoidable misapprehension of the foregoing exhortation to live only for God and heaven was the notion, that it necessarily involved the loss of every thing belonging to this life ; whereas it was, in fact, a deliverance from all care, and the strongest possible assurance that even their earthly wants would be provided for. Therefore, literally, for this, i.e., for this cause, for this very reason. So far was entire devotion to God from leaving those who practised it, in want or in danger of it, that it was the strongest reason for dismissing all anxiety about the subject, because he who serves God will be cared for by him. — *Alexander*. I say unto you. As my disciples, with the authority belonging to me as your master. — *Alexander*. Here this expression is the seal of a divine promise which underlies all that follows. — *Abbott*. (25) Take no thought. The Greek word sometimes thus translated, and sometimes by "care" or "be careful" (1 Cor. 7 : 32-34. Phil. 2 : 20), expresses anxiety, literally, the care which *distracts* us. And this was, in the sixteenth century, the meaning of the English phrase "take thought." Of this, we have one example in 1 Sam. 9 : 5 ; other examples of it are found in Shakespeare, "*take thought, and die for Cæsar*" (*Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1), or Bacon (*Henry the Eighth*, p. 220), who speaks of a man "dying with *thought* and anguish" before his case was heard. The usage of the time, therefore, probably led the translators of 1611 to choose the phrase, as stronger than the "be not careful" which in this passage stood in all previous versions. The changing fortune of words has now made it weaker, and it would be better to substitute "over-careful" or "over-anxious." — *Ellicott*. There is a thought concerning things of this life, which is not only lawful, but a duty, such as is commended in the virtuous woman (Prov. 27 : 23). But the care here forbidden is a disquieting, tormenting care, which hurries the mind hither and thither, which is a damp upon our hope in God, which breaks our sleep, and hinders our enjoyment of what God has given us. It forbids unbelieving thoughts. — *Henry*. For your life. The Greek word is the same as that commonly rendered "soul," and the passage is interesting as an example of its use in the wider sense which includes the lower as well as the higher life (comp. Matt. 10 : 39 ; 16 : 25. Mark 3 : 4). — *Ellicott*. Is not the life more than meat ? ("First reason for not being anxious.") Meat, food. The argument is, Shall not He who gave us the greater, also give us the less ?

for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add ¹ one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the

Mx. 11-18: 29-32

¹ Comp. Ps. 39: 5.

— *Alford*. Our anxiety is about matters of trivial importance. As the life is more than meat which serves it, and the body than raiment which clothes it, so the soul is more than either; for both life and body exist only for the development of the soul. But our anxieties are not for the soul, but only about the outer things, the mere food and raiment. This appears to me to be the meaning; not, as most of the commentators interpret it, God, who has given you life, will much more give you food. (Compare Matt. 10: 28.) — *Abbott*.

26. Behold the fowls of the air. ("Second reason for not being anxious.") The word "fowls," which is now restricted to domesticated birds, was used in old English to denote birds in general. The two examples of the birds and the lilies are not parallel in their application. The first is an argument from the less to the greater, that our heavenly Father, who feeds the birds, will much more feed us; the second, besides this application, which it also contains, is a reproof of the vanity of anxiety about clothing, which, in all its pomp of gorgeous colors, is vouchsafed to the inferior creatures, but not attainable by, as being unworthy of, us. Notice, it is not said, "*Sow not, reap not, gather not into barns.*" The birds are not our example to follow in their habits, for God hath made us to differ from them: the doing all these things is part of our "how much better are ye." — *Alford*. They sow not, neither do they reap. All are fed, and with food convenient for them. Not a sparrow lights to the ground to pick up a grain of corn, but by the providence of God. But specially they are fed without any care of their own. They make no provision for the future themselves, and yet every day provision is made for them. — *Henry*. Your heavenly Father feedeth them. Instead of saying, "*their heavenly Father feedeth them,*" which in a lower sense would be correct, he says, *your heavenly Father*, intimating that the God who thus provides for the inferior animals is bound by a peculiar fatherly relation to provide for man, and still more for those men who, as his Son's disciples, are his children in the most intimate and strictest sense. — *Alexander*. Are ye not much better than they? Assuming a personal will, the will of a Father, as that which governs the order of the universe, we may trust to its wisdom and love to order all things well for the highest as well as the meanest of its creatures. — *Ellicott*. He that feeds his birds, surely will not starve his babes. — *Henry*.

27. Which of you by taking thought . . . add one cubit unto his stature? ("A third reason for not being anxious.") *Cubit*, a measure, 18 to 21 inches long. "*Age*" is preferable to "*stature*" (the word has both meanings); the reference is not to the body, but to the life. Further, to add a cubit (18 inches) to the stature would be a very great thing. — *Schaff*. Either meaning gives an adequate sense to the passage. The last meaning, however, is best. Men are not anxious about adding to their stature: they are often anxious about prolonging their life. Admit the thought that our days are but "as a span long" (Ps. 39: 5), and then the addition of a cubit becomes a natural metaphor. — *Ellicott*.

28. Why take ye thought for raiment? The second thought in ver. 25 is now expanded and illustrated; not only anxiety, but the common and childish vanity about raiment, is reproved. — *Schaff*. The question might well be asked of every race of the whole family of man: Yet we ought not to forget its special pointedness as addressed to a people who reckoned their garments, not less than their money, as part of their capital, and often expended on them the labor of many weeks or months. — *Ellicott*. Consider the lilies. Several flowers have been suggested as answering to the lily of the field. Dr. Thompson in his "Land and Book" thinks it to be the Hûlle lily (see Illustrative, I.). Van Lennep thinks with *Ellicott* below, but refers especially to the wild tulip and poppy, of bright scarlet, and every shade of purple, and pink, and white. — *P*. The hillsides of Galilee are clothed in spring with the crown imperial, and the golden amaryllis, and crimson tulips, and anemones of all shades from scarlet to white, to say nothing of the commoner buttercups and dandelions and daisies; and all these are probably classed roughly together under the generic name of "lilies." And these, with what we may reverently speak of as a love of nature, the Lord tells his disciples to "consider," i.e., not merely to look at with a passing glance, but to study — to learn, as it were, by heart — till they have realized every beauty of structure and form and hue. — *Ellicott*.

field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That¹ even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,

shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly

¹ 1 Kings 10: 4-7.

² Chaps. 8: 26; 14: 31; 16: 8.

29. I say unto you. Our Lord introduces with "*I say unto you*" his revelations of omniscience (see chap. 18: 10, 19). — *Alford*. Solomon in all his glory, &c. Solomon represented to the Jewish mind the ideal of regal magnificence (see 1 Kings, chap. 10). In two respects this declaration is literally true: first, because his glory was external, a glory put on, while that of the flower is its own, being developed from within; second, because the beauty of the most perfect fabric is imperfect, and shows itself rough and coarse under the microscope, while the beauty of the flower has no imperfection, but, on the contrary, discloses under the microscope glories unseen by the naked eye. — *Abbott*. And the meaning hidden beneath the text should not escape the student. As the beauty of the flower is unfolded by the divine Creator-Spirit, from *within*, from the laws and capacities of its *own* individual life, so must all true adornment of man be unfolded *from within* by the same Almighty Spirit. (See 1 Pet. 3: 3, 4.) As nothing from without can defile a man, so neither can any thing from without adorn him. — *Alford*. These verses indicate a *fourth reason for not being anxious* and troubled about earthly needs. Our worry and anxiety are, for the most part, not for the food and clothing which is necessary for our life and usefulness, but for the means to equal or surpass our neighbors in display; and yet, with all our striving, the wild flowers of the field surpass us. — *Abbott*.

30. The grass of the field. Every kind of herb, — among them the lilies which adorn and are cut down with them. — *Lange*. The Arab, when asked the name of these lilies and other wild flowers blooming in the vale, makes no answer but "Hashish," they are "grass." — *Van Lennep*. To-morrow is cast into the oven. In most parts of the East we are told that "wood is very rare: they are reduced, therefore, to the adoption of vegetable matters, twigs, leaves, and refuse. . . . In Persia, heath is the most common fuel. Dr. Russell says they burn at Aleppo parings of fruit, and such like things. Rancroft says, small twigs and straws, when they can have them. D'Arvieux mentions a fire of vine-twigs." — *Calmet*. The Burmans use very little fuel; and this is of a light kind, often the stalks of flowers, reminding me of our Saviour, in Matt. 6: 30. — *Rev. H. Malcolm's Travels in South-eastern Asia*. The oven here mentioned was a large round pot of earthen or other materials, two or three feet high, narrow towards the top. This being first heated by a fire made within, the dough or paste was spread upon the sides to bake, thus forming their cakes. In all these cases the fuel was cast *into* the oven, and, when the oven was sufficiently heated, was raked out again to make room for the bread, after the manner in vogue in the use of the old brick oven. — *Abbott*. Much more clothe you. He who adorns the transient wild flower, so that human pomp is mean in comparison, will most assuredly provide for his children, whose being is not for a day, but forever. — *Schaff*. O ye of little faith. The word is found only in our Lord's teaching, and the passages in which it occurs are all singularly suggestive. The disciples were not faithless or unbelieving, but their trust was weak. They lacked in moments of anxiety the courage which leads men to rely implicitly on the love and wisdom of their Father. So in the stormy night on the lake, or when Peter began to sink in the waves, or when the disciples had forgotten to take bread, the same word recurs. — *Ellicott*.

31. Take no thought. The caution is thrice repeated. There is scarcely one thing about which our Lord warns his disciples more frequently and earnestly than the sin of distracting, distrustful cares about the things of this life. — *Henry*.

32. After all these things do the Gentiles seek. The *Gentiles*, the heathen, the other nations without true religion. This is what you would expect of those who know nothing of our heavenly Father. — *P*. Worldliness and distrust are heathenish. The Pharisees, boasting of freedom from Gentile influence, were guilty of such distrust. Worldly men are quick to mock at the childlike trust in God here commanded. For. This introduces an additional reason, yet one related to the other. Heathen, unbelievers in God's provi-

Father knoweth that ye ¹ have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; ² and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day ³ is the evil thereof.

¹ Verse 8. ² Comp. 1 Kings 3: 11-14. Mark 10: 29, 30. 1 Tim. 4: 8.

dence, may act in this forbidden manner. Do not resemble them; for you believe that you have a heavenly Father, and he knoweth that ye have need of all these things. He does not forbid your wants, but supplies them. — *Schaff*.

33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Not in order of time merely, but in order of importance. Interpret this command by ver. 24. — *Abbott*. The kingdom of God will naturally mean the service of Christ, and his righteousness those good works which Christ's servants are bound to do for his sake, and in the spirit enjoined by him. — *Cook*. And all these things. All what things? Not an accumulation of food and raiment; piety is not a short road to wealth; but all of those things of which your heavenly Father knows you have need; i.e., enough day by day to supply daily need. — *Abbott*. The map of the world is unimpeachable proof of this statement. The more Christian a nation, the more it has of this world's blessings. And most of the losses, strikes, failures, disasters in business, come directly or indirectly from seeking mammon first, and not the kingdom of God. — *P*. This verse, which contains the crowning thought of this chapter, echoes the crowning thought of the whole discourse (chap. 5: 48). — *Schaff*.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow. Be not troubled, distracted, anxious, about the future. It does not speak of what we call thought, looking out for, providing for, the future. No precept of divine wisdom has found so many echoes in the wisdom of the world. Epicurean self-indulgence, Stoic apathy, practical common-sense, have all preached the same lesson, and bidden men to cease their questionings about the future. That which was new in our Lord's teaching was the ground on which the precept rested. It was not simply the *carpe diem* — "make the most of the present" — of the seeker after a maximum of enjoyment, nor the acceptance by man's will of an inevitable destiny, nor the vain struggle to rise above that inevitable fate. Men were to look forward to the future calmly, to avoid the temper

"Over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils," —

because they had a Father in heaven who cared for each one of them with a personal and individualizing love. — *Ellicott*. For the morrow shall take thought for itself. Not "take care of itself," but "bring its own cares and anxieties." do not foolishly increase those of to-day by borrowing from the morrow. Sufficient unto the day (or, for the day) is the evil thereof. "Evil" may mean natural or moral evil, suffering, or sin. The latter sense is the more usual one, the former suits the context better. Perhaps both may be included, the sin being the want of trust under the suffering. A hint that we never fully obey the precepts just uttered, because our dedication to God is so imperfect. — *Schaff*. This verse indicates the line between the forethought that is a duty, and the care that is a sin. Forethought considers a future possible ill only in so far as it is necessary to determine present duty. Care brings, by imagination, the possible evil from the future, and inflicts it on us here and now. — *Abbott*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. "This Hûleh lily is very large; and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his

He who loves me will keep his commandments, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him. He who does not love me does not keep my commandments. Therefore, if you do not keep my commandments, you will not see me. He who keeps my commandments will abide in me, and I will abide in him, and I will manifest myself to him. He who does not keep my commandments will not see me. Therefore, if you do not keep my commandments, you will not see me. He who keeps my commandments will abide in me, and I will abide in him, and I will manifest myself to him. He who does not keep my commandments will not see me. Therefore, if you do not keep my commandments, you will not see me.

MARCH 7

LESSON X.

MATT. 7: 1-14.

utmost glory. And when I met this incomparable flower, in all its loveliness, among the oak woods around the north base of Tabor and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent his youth, I felt assured that it was to this he referred."—*Land and Book*.

II. No thought for the morrow. — "When Bulstrode Whitelock was about to embark as Cromwell's envoy to Sweden, in 1655, he was much disturbed in mind as he rested in Harwich on the preceding night, which was very stormy, while he reflected on the distracted state of the nation. It happened that a confidential servant slept in an adjacent bed, who, finding that his master could not sleep, said, — 'Pray, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a question?' — 'Certainly.' — 'Pray, sir, don't you think God governed the world very well before you came into it?' — 'Undoubtedly.' — 'And pray, sir, don't you think that he can take care of it while you are in it?' To this question Whitelock had nothing to reply, but turning about soon fell asleep."—*Scrap-book*.

III. "At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. 'Do you not know?' she replied: 'God in heaven is dead.' — 'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I said. 'How can God die? Why, he is immortal, and will live through all eternity.' — 'Is that really true?' she asked. 'Of course,' I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at: 'how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in heaven, so sure is it that he can never die.' — 'And yet,' she said, 'though you do not doubt that, yet you are so hopeless and discouraged.' Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness."—*Luther*.

IV. Vers. 28, 29. Cræsus, king of Lydia, who felt presumptuously proud on account of his power and riches, had dressed himself one day in his utmost splendor of apparel and royal ornaments, and, seating himself on his throne, exhibited his person to Solon, as comprehending within itself the substance and sum of all worldly glory. "Have you ever beheld," said he to the Grecian sage, "a spectacle more august?" — "I have," was the answer: "there is neither a pheasant in our fields, nor a peacock in our courtyard, nor a cock on our dunghill, that does not surpass you in glory!"

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 24. Every one must take his choice of masters, the world or Christ; and he has the work, the care, and the rewards of the master he serves.

2. No one can serve two masters, but he *must* serve one.

3. Ver. 25. Many misunderstand and pervert the Scripture, because they do not understand what it says: the word "thought" has changed in meaning since the translation of the Bible, but the *Bible* has not changed.

4. Melancholy commonly flees to the future for its aliment. — *Sydney Smith*.

5. "Our worst misfortunes are those that never befall us." — *Proverb*.

6. Forethought, preparing for the future, is not forbidden, but continually commanded, in the Bible.

7. Over-anxiety, anxious care about the future, is the bane of peace and comfort.

8. It also is a sign of want of faith in our heavenly Father.

9. Vers. 26-30. Nature is a constant source of instruction to all who study it.

10. We know what God will do for us, by what he does for others.

11. This rule does not forbid, but *requires*, the use of means for supplying our wants. The birds must seek food, the lilies must absorb nourishment.

12. He that trusts in God's care can be at rest when tempted to do wrong for gain.

13. Ver. 33. All subordinate goods come in the train of the highest good. It is true not only of individuals, but of towns and nations, that those who do most for the spiritual shall in the end have the most of the temporal.

14. There ought to be a very marked difference between the Church and the world.

LESSON X. — MARCH 7, 1880.

THE SAVIOUR'S GOLDEN RULE. — MATT. 7: 1-14.

TIME. — In the summer of A.D. 28.

PLACE. — The Mount of Beatitudes, near the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee.

CONNECTION.

Commentators have found much difficulty in tracing the connection between these verses and the preceding. Yet it is remarkable that these very verses are included also in St. Luke's account of the same discourse (6 : 37, 38, 41, 42), and are thus clearly shown to belong to it. In St. Luke, however, they are introduced immediately after the verses which correspond to the conclusion of chap. 5, the whole of chap. 6 being omitted; and this circumstance may perhaps furnish a key to the connection. Chap. 6, we have seen to be connected with the mention of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (verse 20). The present verses have a similar connection. In both, the *hypocrisy* of the scribes and Pharisees is censured, first as regards their ostentation in the performance of good works, and now again as regards their judgment of others, as compared with their estimate of themselves. St. Matthew gives both instances. St. Luke omits the first, and narrates the second in its logical connection, though not in its actual place in the discourse.—*Canon Cook.*

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| <p>1. ¹ Judge not, that ye be not judged.</p> <p>2. ² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged : and ³ with</p> | <p>what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.</p> <p>3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but</p> |
|---|---|

¹ Luke 6 : 37, 38, 41, 42. ² Rom. 2 : 1, 3; 14 : 10. Jas. 2 : 13; 4 : 11, 12. ³ Mark 4 : 24.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **Judge not.** That is, rashly or harshly, or hastily, for the sake of judging—or with a spirit of severe judgment. This applies to backbiting and slandering the character and conduct. We may form opinions of others, but not censoriously, or enviously, or unfairly.—*Jacobus.* “To judge” here is not to form an opinion, but to impute *bad motives* to others' conduct.—*P.* In proportion as any nation, any church, any society, any individual man, rises above the common forms of evil that surround them (as the Jews were really in the van of religious progress of the nations), they are disposed to sit in judgment on those who are still in the evil.—*Ellicott.* This neither refers (unconditionally) to our private judgment, nor to the official expression of our opinion which we may be bound in duty to give (which, however, may run into the sinful extreme here condemned). Least of all, does it apply to the sentence pronounced by a judge (who should always bear in mind that he is under the holy law of God), but to those uncalled-for judgments which are neither dictated by duty nor prompted by love.—*Lange.* **That ye be not judged.** By other men; and by God, who rewards every man according to his deeds.—*P.* Ver. 6 proves that judgment on earth precedes the judgment of the last day. Uncharitable judgment receives its meed here as well as there.—*Lange.*

2. **For with what judgment ye judge.** The strict measure of your judgment will be made the standard according to which ye shall be judged. As professedly you consider it *right*, you shall experience in your own case whether your standard be true or false. Truth and equity are, so to speak, elastic; and, in the moral order of things, an unjust blow will recoil on him who has dealt it.—*Lange.* Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai (Esth. 6). “As I have done, so God hath requited me.” See the case of Adoni-bezec (Judg. 1 : 7). And especially when we condemn in others the same sins that we ourselves commit, we condemn ourselves most severely (Rom. 2 : 1). Christ condemns our taking satisfaction in judging others, and our indulging sin in ourselves; for these things commonly go together.—*Jacobus.* **With what measure ye mete** (i.e., measure). This is another way of putting the same truth. The way to obtain love is to love. If you hate everybody, you will be hated. If you are friendly to all, you will have friends. The church that gives most and does most for others, for the poor, for the heathen, will also receive the most of every spiritual good.—*P.*

3. **Why beholdest** (the verb means to observe, to voluntarily *stare* at), **thou the mote in thy brother's eye?** The Greek noun translated “mote” means a stalk or twig, rather than one of the fine particles of dust floating in the sun, to which we attach the word “mote.” The illustration seems to have been a familiar one among the Jews, and a proverb all but verbally identical is found as a saying of Rabbi Tarphon. Like illustrations have been found in the proverbs and satires of every country, all teaching that

considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6. ¶ ¹Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your

¹ Chap. 15: 26.

men are keen-sighted as to the faults of others, blind as to their own. The Gracchi complain of sedition, and Clodius accuses others of adultery. We all need the wish, —

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel's as others see us!"

Ellicott.

Considerest not the beam. Considerest not, "apprehendest not." Stronger word than "beholdest." The beam, a hyperbolical expression for a great fault, to show the relative magnitude. No reference to one class of sins. The "mote" which might be overlooked is looked for, the "beam" of which one must be conscious is not considered. — *Schaff.* The beam was a huge timber. How is it, asks our Lord, that you look at a neighbor, and see sharply the smallest offences or faults of his, and do not see your own disposition or conduct? — *Jacobus.*

4. How wilt thou say. In Luke, "How canst thou say." Luther renders it, "How darest thou say?" — *Alford.* His hypocrisy consists not merely in his refusing to see the mote in his own eye, but also in his disguising his want of charity for his brother under the garb of compassionate zeal. It is common for those who are most sinful themselves, and least sensible of it, to be most free in judging others. The Pharisees, who were most hearty in justifying themselves, were most scornful in condemning others. Reflect, says Seneca, that perhaps the fault of which you complain, may, on examination, be found in yourself. — *Henry.*

5. Thou hypocrite. The man deserves this name, because he acts the part of a teacher and reformer, when he himself needs repentance and reform the most. The hypocrisy is all the greater because it does not know itself to be hypocritical. — *Ellicott.* First. Before you meddle with others, get rid of your own fault or sin, which may be much greater than theirs. Then shalt thou see clearly. With purified eye. The close is remarkable. Before, to behold the mote was all, — to stare at thy brother's faults, and, as people do who stand and gaze at an object, attract others to gaze also; but now the object is a very different one, — to cast out the mote, to help thy brother to be rid of his fault, by doing him the best and most difficult office of Christian friendship. The beholding was vain and idle; the seeing clearly is for a blessed end; namely, to gain thy brother. — *Alford.* Here the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount rises far above the level of the maxims which, to a certain extent, it resembles. It gives a new motive to the work of self-scrutiny and self-reformation. While we are blind with self-deceit, we are but bunglers in the work of dealing with the faults of others. When we have wrestled with and overcome our own besetting sins, then, and not till then, shall we be able, with the insight and tact which the work demands, to help others to overcome theirs. — *Ellicott.*

6. Give not that which is holy. Harsh judgment and unwise correction of others were reprov'd (vers. 1-5): now comes a warning against laxity of judgment, childish ignorance of men. The two extremes often meet. The latter, no less than censoriousness, is an unwise attempt at the correction of others, and will be avoided by those who "see clearly" — *Schaff.* In giving reproof, we shall meet with men who will scoff at precious truths, and rage at just and friendly warnings, and hence we should be ready to endure contempt and persecution with firmness; and we shall often be constrained to let the scorner alone, lest we drive him to madness or blasphemy. — *Scott.* The similitude is derived from "the holy things," the meat offered in sacrifice, of which no unclean person was to eat (Lev. 22: 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16). — *Alford.* It is not that the dogs would not eat it, for it would be welcome to them; but that it would be a profanation to give it to them (Exod. 22: 31). — *Trench.* So men often love to argue on religion, and even read the Bible, not that they may get any good, but find some new perversion or false argument against the truth. In many cases it is wise not to argue with settled errorists, but seek to change them first to sincere men and Christians. Unto the dogs. The Oriental dog is more gregarious and savage than the western, less attached to man, and, being chiefly fed on garbage, more

pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

¹7. ¶ Ask, ²and it shall be given

you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth;

¹ Luke 11: 9-13. ² Chaps. 18, 19; 21: 22. John 14: 13; 15: 7; 16: 23, 24. Jas. 1: 5, 6. 1 John 3: 22; 2: 14, 15.

disgusting in its habits and appearance. Hence the dog is chiefly spoken of in scripture as an object or expression of contempt. — *Alexander*. Neither cast ye your pearls before swine. Pearls are an image of what is most precious; sacred things, Christian truth. To swine. Besides their natural and universal habits, there attached a religious odium as an unclean animal, excluded not only from the altar but the table. The dogs and swine may either be promiscuously blended as a joint type of all that is abhorrent in human character, or so far separated that the dog shall represent the class of violent and savage foes, the swine those peculiarly impure and degraded. The antithesis is clearly between things the most highly valued among men, and animals incapable of using or enjoying them. — *Alexander*. Lest they trample them under their feet. The pollution, not the destruction, of the precious things is represented. — *Schaff*. Turn again, and rend you. Turning away from what they cannot taste or value, or perhaps turning on you as the object of attack. Rend is a Greek verb, which strictly means to break, but is applied by Æschylus to the tearing of a veil or robe, and by Pindar to the wounding of the human body. The essential ideas are those of blind contempt for what is really most sacred and most precious, and ferocious enmity towards those from whom it is received or offered. The lesson taught is, that even saving truth must be withheld from those who would certainly reject it with contempt and savage hatred. As cases of this sort are rare, and not to be assumed without necessity, the passage furnishes no pretext for an indolent or cowardly suppression of the truth in order to avoid a personal danger. — *Alexander*.

7. Christ now gives two conditions of entering the kingdom of heaven: (1) The prayer of faith, vers. 7-11; (2) obedience, 12-14.

THE FIRST CONDITION. — *The prayer of faith.*

Ask, and it shall be given. A definite assurance of a special hearing of prayer, procuring us from God what he without the prayer would certainly not have bestowed upon us. — *Van Oosterzee*. Ask, seek, knock. The three words imply distinct degrees of intensity. There is the "asking" in the spoken words of prayer, the "seeking" in the efforts and labors which are acted prayers, the "knocking" at the gate with the urgent importunity which claims admission into our Father's house. — *Ellicott*. There are three ways in which prayers are answered. (1) In the praying itself is an answer, the communion with God that comes through prayer; but this cannot come without another answer. (2) There is a giving of the exact thing we ask for, in all cases where direct promises are made, or where it would be good for us to receive it; but not always in the way, or at the time, we may set. (3) As many times the exact thing we ask for, in the form we ask for it, would be the worst thing for us, and what we really do not want; therefore, in such cases God gives us the *spirit* of our prayer, what we really would have asked for had we known all things as he does. A child asks for *poison*, thinking the white powder is sugar. The parent refuses the poison, and gives real sugar instead. He, not in literal form, but a thousand times more really, gives what the child asks for. So does God with us, and so at last will we see that *every true prayer is really answered*. — *P*. Seek, and ye shall find. Christ here urges us, with condensed concern, to seek, for we shall find. What the object of this ceaseless and infinite quest shall be, is left sublimely unuttered. The unmentioned thing is the supreme thing. There is only one aim large enough and noble enough to satisfy your soul's hunger, when you make a fair, free, deliberate decision. The one true search of man can have but one object, — God. — *Huntington*. Seek, and ye shall find. Was a divine promise ever broken or forgotten? I believe Christian people themselves do not duly weigh the affront of distrusting God's pledges. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Knocking implies importunity, that will not be denied. Seeking may be anywhere; but we knock at the door of One who has treasures, character, goodness, to obtain from him the help no mere seeking of our own can give. — *P*.

8. For every one that asketh receiveth. The only limitation to this promise, which under various forms is several times repeated by our Lord, is furnished in vers. 9-11, and in Jas. 4: 3. — *Alford*. Believing prayer is never vain or unsuccessful. — *Alexander*. Promises to the praying heart are without limitation on God's side. There is not the slightest intimation that we can trespass by a too frequent supplication. Large asking and

and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11. If ye then, ¹being evil, know

how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12. ²Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for ³this is the law and the prophets.

¹ Chap. 12: 34. ² Luke 6: 31. ³ Chap. 22: 40.

large expectation on our part honor God. — *A. L. Stone.* Faith is not the mere expectation of a particular thing. It is trust in God's goodness and love; and if we have not the faith that trusts God as to the time of the answer, or the kind of answer, whether it be the removal of the thorn, or more grace to bear it, we have not faith enough to rightly expect any answer. — *P.* In the whole realm of life, energetic, faithful endeavor is generally crowned with success. Even the Pharisee, who seeks the praise of men by his public alms, prayers, and fasting, has his reward. How much more shall he that asks, seeks, knocks, receive in the kingdom of God's grace! — *Abbott.* We often talk of holding a man by his word; and, if he be an honest man, we have nothing by which we can hold him more firmly. Here let us therefore take *Him* at his word, and, relying on his engagement, *whoever* we are, *whatever* be our condition, draw near in full assurance of faith. — *William Jay.*

9. If his son ask bread . . . give him a stone. The loaves or cakes used in the East resembled somewhat a smooth flat stone. A deceptive answer is meant. — *Schaff.* There is here implied, too, not merely a promise to give some answer to the prayer, but to give *the thing asked for, or something better.* God may do more for us than we ask or think; but never less. If we ask a stone, thinking it bread, God will give us the bread and not the stone. — *Abbott.*

10. If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? i.e., give him a response both deceptive and hurtful. — *Schaff.*

11. If ye, then, being evil; i.e., sinful, imperfect. Even in our highest, holiest relations there is evil: selfishness is mingled with our most unselfish love. — *Abbott.* Good gifts to your children. This is the rule. **How much more.** The difference is infinite. Your Father who is in heaven. He was to be thus addressed in prayer (chap. 5: 9): real prayer is based on this relation. **Good things.** Luke 11: 13, "the Holy Spirit," which is the best of the "good things:" he who receives the Holy Spirit may expect all the rest, as far as "good" for him. God gives good gifts only, and what he gives is always good. — *Schaff.* The argument is conclusive. If God does not answer prayer, and if what he gives us in response to our asking is not the best for us, then God is not as good as an earthly parent. — *P.*

THE SECOND CONDITION of entering the kingdom. — *Obedience.*

12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you. These practical counsels are naturally concluded and summed up by this *Golden Rule*: Deal with others as ye would be dealt with by others, even as ye are dealt with by God. Be true, just, and kind, in your judgments, as he is. Forgive as he forgives. Give that which is good, give generously and with discrimination, as God gives. — *J. G. Butler.* The Golden Rule, though not without parallels in heathen ethics (in a negative form), is distinctively Christian. (1) It presents God's benevolence as the guide of duty. (2) Hence it is positive ("Do all the good you can to your neighbor"), not negative ("Do not to your neighbor what is odious to you, for this is the whole law," as in Confucius). (3) It is taught by One who wrought as well as taught righteousness, who died that we might even so do also. It is equivalent to, "Love thy neighbor as thyself;" it equals the whole law. The rule does not require us to do *the things* which they ask, but to act toward them in the manner and spirit in which we should wish them to act toward us. This rule works in two ways: while directly it requires us to act toward others as we should wish them to act toward us, in spirit and implication it requires us to wish from others no more than we should be willing to render to them if our positions were reversed. — *Abbott.* **This is the law and the prophets.** That is, the object of the law and the prophets is to produce that state of heart and life of which the Golden Rule is the natural expression in daily conduct. — *Abbott.*

13. ¶¹ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14. Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* ² the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

¹ Luke 13: 24. ² Ps. 16: 11.

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate. The narrow, difficult gate. "Strait" is here used not as "straight," but as we say he is in "straits," or the "Straits" of Gibraltar. This is the gate into the Christian life, at its entrance. It is narrow because there is but *one* way to become a Christian, faith and love; while there are a thousand ways of not being a Christian, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction. There are a multitude of sins, each of which is a way to ruin. There is one direction that points to the North Star, but a million directions point away from it.—*P.* To destruction. The end of sin is destruction. It destroys life, health, happiness, hope, heaven. The destruction often begins in this world: it is completed in the next.—*P.*

14. Strait the gate, narrow the way. This is so, not to keep people out of life, but because it cannot be otherwise. (1) The way is as broad as the love of God can make it. (2) Christ does not *make* the way narrow: he only states a *fact*. (3) It is a *necessary* fact. One virtue does not make a man virtuous, but one deliberate sin makes him sinful. One ounce of flour in a barrel of poison does not make the poison good, but one ounce of poison in a barrel of flour poisons the whole. Not the road to virtue alone, but the road to wealth, to wisdom, to every great good, is narrow. The road cannot be made wider without lessening the good gained: it must be a meaner virtue, a poorer heaven, a smaller good, if the way is wider to it. Few there be that find it. A fact at the time. He does not say it will always be so, he does not say it *must* be so. All can find who will seek.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On "judge not," see A. Helps's "Friends in Council," vol. i., Series 2, p. 149, "Criticism;" and Jacox's "Scripture Texts illustrated by Literature," Series 1, p. 217. On the mote and the beam, Jacox, Series 1, p. 187. F. D. Huntington's "Sermons for the People," on verses 7, 8, "Asking and Receiving," and "The Soul's March." On the same verses, "Christ in Literature," p. 217. On verse 12, the Golden Rule, sermons by Chalmers, vol. vi., and N. W. Taylor. See Arnot's "Roots and Fruits;" "The Strait Gate not a Shut Gate," ver. 14. Trench's Poems, p. 207, "The Suppliant," gives a fine illustration of one answer to prayer. The other form of the Golden Rule is found in Confucius, "Analects," 15: 13; and Isocrates, quoted in Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." The gate as wide as God can make it, practically discussed in Joseph Cook's Monday Lectures, "Transcendentalism," p. 187.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Ver. 2. Receiving what we measure to others is illustrated by the well-known story of the boy and the echo, bearing back the words he uttered.

II. The mote and the beam is illustrated by the old fable of the man who carried two wallets, — a small one behind him, filled with his own faults; and a large one in front, before his eyes, crammed with the faults of other people.

III. "Zeal has vanished," exclaims the idle talker. "Oh for more consistency!" groans out the hypocrite. "We want more vital godliness," protests the false pretender. As in the old legend, the wolf preached against sheep-stealing, so very many hunt down those sins in others which they gladly shelter in themselves. — *Biblical Museum*.

IV. The mote and the beam. — The clapper complained that the bell was cracked. "It is true," remarked a bystander, "but *you* cracked it; and, moreover, it would never have been known but by you: you proclaim everywhere that crack in the bell."

V. The strait gate. — The old city of Troy had but one gate. You would search in vain for a second through all its high walls in all their ample circumference. There was only one way, and no other could be found that led into the city. Nevertheless the one gate was passable for all save an enemy. Even so is the way into life eternal in the city of God. — *The Christian*.

VI. Dr. Taylor described what he had seen at Jerusalem: The strait gate is the last gate to be closed at night; and, if people do not enter before it is closed, they must wait until morning. At the close he pressed upon the congregation most solemnly that "the gate" was probably ajar for some of them, and asked them to enter to-night before it closed. — *The Christian Ark, Rangoon, India.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 1-5. We have no right to impute bad motives to others, for we cannot know their hearts.
2. We may expect, in the end, to receive from society the measure we give to it, — love for love, hate for hate, help for help.
3. Those who are most ready to condemn others, thereby proclaim that they are probably worse than those they condemn.
4. Harsh judgment of others is a worse sin than the sins judged in others.
5. Only those who have gained the victory over their own sins can help others to overcome theirs.
6. When we have repented and forsaken our sins, we desire more to help others than to condemn them.
7. Vers. 7-9. Those who are in earnest seek in every way to obtain the desired good.
8. Ver. 11. We learn about our Father in heaven from our earthly relations.
9. The gifts necessary for existence are given without seeking; as, light, air, the Word of God. But the best gifts, in the best degree, come only by seeking; as, the Holy Spirit, growth in grace, usefulness.
10. Vers. 13, 14. The way to all good, as well as to heaven, is narrow, but is as broad as the love of God can make it.
11. The gate is narrow, but it is open for all to enter.

LESSON XI. — MARCH 14, 1880.

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE. — MATT. 7: 15-29.

TIME. — The summer of A.D. 28.

PLACE. — The Mount of Beatitudes, near the Sea of Galilee.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee. The known world under the government of Rome.

INTRODUCTORY.

Christ still continues his sermon on the principles of his kingdom. There was so much danger of taking a mere outward view, and being deceived by appearances, that Christ warns his disciples against it, and shows them how to distinguish the false from the true.

15. ¹Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's cloth- ing, but inwardly they are ²ravenous wolves:

¹ Chap. 24: 11, 24. ² Pet. 2: 1. ¹ John 4: 1. ² Ezek. 22: 27. Acts 20: 30.

EXPLANATORY.

15. **Beware of false prophets.** How was the narrow way to be found? (spoken of in the last lesson.) Who would act as guide? Many would offer their help, who would simply lead men to the destruction which they sought to escape. Such teachers, claiming authority as inspired, there had been in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah. — *Ellicott.* A false prophet is not merely an erroneous teacher, but a lying teacher: strictly speaking, one pretending to an inspiration which he does not possess; secondarily, any teacher deliberately deceiving others. The caution applies directly to such in our time as claim to

16. Ye shall know them ¹by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19. ²Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

¹ Ver. 20. Chap. 12: 33. Luke 6: 43, 44. ² Chap. 3: 10.

possess communication with the spirit-world, or to be invested with direct and infallible authority to speak for God; indirectly, to all who put on a semblance of piety for selfish purposes. Its application, as is made clear in the next verse, is not so much to open and avowed teachers of error, men who deny the fundamental principles of the Gospel, as to those who pretend to maintain, but really undermine and destroy them. — *Abbott*. In sheep's clothing. The metaphor is of a wolf putting on the sheep's skin; the thing signified is a selfish and designing man putting on the garb of meekness, gentleness, and piety (2 Cor. 11: 13, 15. 2 Tim. 3: 5). — *Abbott*.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. We are to judge of the teaching of those who claim authority by the test of the measure in which, in the long-run, it promotes purity, peace, and holiness. — *Ellicott*. Literally, *fully, perfectly know them*. The infallible test of all religious teaching is its practical result in the lives of those that receive it. The answer to modern eulogists of Buddhism and Confucianism is India and China; the answer to the papal claim of infallibility is Spain and Italy; the answer to the eulogists of "pure reason," and a Bible overthrown, is Paris during the Revolution and Paris during the Commune. New England is the best refutation of those that sneer at Puritanism; and Christendom, contrasted with the heathen world, is a short but conclusive reply to all advocates of a universal and eclectic religion. — *Abbott*. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? The fruits most highly prized in the East. From teachers we are to look for valuable fruit; but false teachers can only bear after their kind (vers. 17, 18), they are "thorns" and "thistles." The productions of the bushes here named are said to resemble slightly the fruits spoken of in each case; the harsh spirit of the false teachers has been compared to the sharpness of the thorns, and their proselyting spirit to the adhesive quality of the thistle. The main point is, however, the impossibility of getting good fruit from "fruitless and forbidding plants." — *Schaff*.

17. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. There is a wonderful significance in the simple image running through the whole of Scripture, according to which men are compared to trees, and their work to fruit — the fruit being the organic product and evidence of the inner life, not something arbitrarily fastened on from without. It is a comparison which helps greatly to set forth the true relation between faith and works, which relation is, in fact, just as plainly declared by our Lord, here, as by Paul in any of his epistles. There are three kinds of works spoken of in the New Testament, which may all be illustrated from this image: First, *good* works, when the tree, being made good, bears fruit of the same character; then, *dead* works, such as have a fair outward appearance, but are not the living outgrowth of the renewed man — fruit, as it were, attached and fastened on from without, alms given that they may be gloried in, prayers made that they may be seen, works such as were most of those of the Pharisees; and, lastly, *wicked* works, when the corrupt tree bears fruit manifestly of its own kind. — *Trench*.

18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, &c. If the tree is corrupt, i.e., rotten or decayed at the core, it cannot bring forth good fruit. If there is falseness in the teaching or in the man, it will sooner or later show itself in his life; and then, even though we judge of the doctrine on other ground, we should cease to feel confidence in the guidance of the teacher. — *Ellicott*.

19. The figure is carried further to show the awful destiny of the false teachers. Every tree. Irrespective of its kind in this case. That bringeth not forth good fruit. Is entirely barren. All is here made dependent on the fruitfulness. Is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Such trees can only be used for fuel. The same language was used by John the Baptist (3: 10), in a wider application, which holds good still. — *Schaff*. You can tell a tree from the fruit it bears, and so you can tell a teacher from the fruit his doctrines yield; and so you can tell every good man from his habitual good actions. As a corrupt tree of bad nature and quality brings forth an evil kind of fruit, so a bad doctrine brings forth bad results. Isolated acts of men may seem every way righteous, while they are not Christian. The question cannot be upon detached doings. But (upon the general

20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21. ¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22. ²Many will say to me in that

day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied ³ in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in ⁴ thy name done many wonderful works?

23. And then will I profess unto them, I ⁵ never knew you: ⁶depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24. ⁷Therefore whosoever heareth

¹ Luke 6: 46. Rom. 2: 13. Jas. 1: 22. ² Chap. 25: 11, 12. Luke 13: 25-27. ³ Comp. 1 Cor. 13: 2. ⁴ Mark 9: 38. ⁵ Ps. 102: 4. ⁶ Chap. 25: 41. ⁷ Luke 6: 47-49.

tenor of his life) was the *man* righteous? — *Jacobus*. The tree that no longer bears fruit for food, or leaves for shade, perishes: the soul that ceases to bear any fruit for God and humanity is destroyed. There is no restoration. The destruction is final. Fire is here used as a symbol of utter destruction. — *Abbott*. The only use of bad men, as of fruitless trees, is when they are dead, and they may be at least a warning to others.

21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord. Christ, as the great searcher of the heart, will distinguish. Not all shall enter into life who profess Christ, however repeatedly and loudly and familiarly saying, *Lord, Lord*, as though they were his followers. He demands a profession of his name; but those who have only this, he will exclude and reject. — *Jacobus*. The kingdom of heaven. God's real spiritual kingdom, where Christ rules in the heart. Of the two applications of this expression to denote the Church militant on earth, and the Church triumphant hereafter, it sometimes happens that the one predominates to the exclusion of the other. In the present verse the language is applicable only to the glorified Church which shall reign with Christ hereafter, while in such passages as chap. 13: 24, it relates in the first instance only to that visible Church in which the evil are mingled with the good. Here the reference is made clear by the mention in the next verse of *that day*, the great day of judgment which is to precede the entrance into the kingdom of heaven. — *Cook*. He that doeth the will of my Father. He that obeys God, and does what God wishes him to. That "will" embraces trust in Christ as our strength (John 6: 29), love to our fellow-men (John 15: 12), personal purity of character (1 Thess. 4: 3), and the cultivation of the graces that are the fruit of the Spirit (1 Thess. 5: 18. 1 Pet. 2: 15; 4: 2, &c.). It is by God's Spirit alone that we are enabled to do his will (Heb. 13: 21. Rev. 7: 17). — *Abbott*.

22. In that day. Perhaps refers to ver. 19; or it may be the expression, so common in the prophets, of the great day of the Lord. — *Alford*. The day of judgment. Have we not prophesied in thy name? Here, as everywhere in the New Testament, "prophesying" is more than mere prediction, and includes the whole work of delivering a message to men, as coming directly from God. — *Ellicott*. In thy name cast out devils. By the authority of thy name have we not cast out devils? This was the greatest exercise of healing power. Wonderful works. The word usually means miracles. Judged by external results hypocrites may appear successful in spiritual works; such may have shared in the miraculous power of the early church. — *Schaff*. The spirit of the warning extends far beyond the extraordinary cases actually mentioned, and applies to all those in all ages who, whether teachers or hearers, nominally profess Christian doctrine without holiness of life. — *Cook*. Who do all the outward works of religion, support the gospel, give to missions, help build churches, and carry on meetings, without the love of Christ in their hearts. — *P*. The spirit of this is, Have we not merited thy favor by what we have done? There is a fearful tendency in man to attach the idea of merit to his religious conduct. How many there are who imagine that by their social integrity, their benevolent deeds, their devotional observances, they will procure the favor of their Maker! But he who has this idea has not learnt the alphabet of Christianity. — *Thomas*.

23. Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Greek, *publicly profess*. The disclosure of the false character of the fruitless professor of religion will be before men and angels (Matt. 25: 32). Depart from me. God now abides even with the ungodly, that he may lead them to repentance (Rom. 2: 4). He will then separate them from him forever (2 Thess. 2: 9). Compare with this entire passage 1 Cor. 13: 1-3, and observe that in the only passage where Christ pictorially describes the judgment-scene, the judgment is portrayed as dependent upon the course of daily life (Matt. 25: 31-46); and that the sentence, as recorded in Rev. 22: 11, is a simple fixing, eternally and irreversibly, of the character formed here. — *Abbott*.

these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell

not : for it was founded upon a rock.

26. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish¹ man, which built his house upon the sand :

¹ 1 Sam. 2: 30. Jer. 8: 9.

24. Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine . . . doeth them. This is the only valid form of religion — the only form that will obtain the approbation of Christ, and stand the test of the retributive economy. Christianity is a system intended not merely to awaken excitement, or instruct the intellect, but to rule the life and form the character. — *Thomas*. A wise man . . . built his house upon a rock. There was still a danger to which many were exposed who could not be accused of hypocrisy or false profession in the strict sense of the terms. Even after hearing all that Christ had said in correction of prevailing misconceptions and of practical abuses, some might, after all, content themselves with having heard it, and make no attempt to act upon it. — *Alexander*. The symbol which Christ employs here would possess a significance for his hearers which it has not for us. In the East the peasants' huts are often unsubstantial structures, built of mud or sunburnt brick, and sometimes washed away by a single furious rain-storm. Their mountain streams, too, are of a peculiar character. These water-courses, called *wadies*, are in the summer perfectly dry, in the rainy season they are swollen streams. The shepherd builds his hut by one of these water-courses, which often in the summer weather affords the only herbage which is not burnt up by the sun. If the house is built high up on the rock, it is safe ; if down on the sandy soil, though there is no water at the time, the treacherous foundation gives away with the first freshet ; and these often come with almost no note of warning, and as a result of rains farther up the stream. — *Abbott*. His house. Interpreting the parable in the connection in which our Lord has placed it, it is clear that the house is the general fabric of an outwardly religious life. — *Ellicott*. The rock, as signifying Him who spoke this, is of too frequent use in Scripture for us to overlook it here. He founds his house on a rock, who, hearing the words of Christ, brings his heart and life into accordance with his expressed will, and is thus, by faith, in union with him, founded on him. — *Alford*.

25. The rain descended . . . floods came. The "wind," the "rain," the "floods," hardly admit, unless by an unreal minuteness, of individual interpretation, but represent collectively the violence of persecution, of suffering, of temptations from without, beneath which all but the life which rests on the true foundation necessarily gives way. — *Ellicott*. It fell not. Christ is as immovable as a rock : we may venture our all upon him, and not be ashamed of our hope. Christ is our only way to the Father. Those build upon Christ, who, having sincerely taken him as their Prince and Saviour, make it their constant care to be conformed to his rules. Building upon a rock requires care and pains. They who do it must give diligence. They are wise builders who begin so to build that they may be able to finish, and therefore lay a firm foundation. — *Henry*.

26. A foolish man . . . house upon the sand. The "sand" answers to the shifting uncertain feelings which are with some men (the "foolish" ones of the parable) the only ground on which they act, — love of praise, respect for custom, and the like. — *Ellicott*. Some build their hopes on worldly prosperity, as if that were a sure token of God's favor ; others upon their profession, privileges, or reputation. Every thing besides Christ is sand. — *Henry*. He who merely hears Christ's words, but does them not, has never dug down to the rock, nor become united with it, nor has any stability in the hour of trial. — *Alford*.

27. Rains descended, floods, winds. So the trial of the last great day will come, without warning (Matt. 24: 36-39, 42-44), and overwhelm those whose exterior was fair, but the foundation of whose life was insecure. As the builder would know, or easily might know, the danger of building on the sand, and yet build there for the sake of ease and transient convenience, so many who confess that it is not safe to build on any other foundation than a practical obedience to Jesus Christ, yet do build otherwise, and trust to a vague hope to escape the day of trial when it comes. — *Abbott*. Thus so many professors fall before temptation in daily life. Great was the fall. How miserable the circumstances of this man ! Think of the amount of his loss. All the money, anxiety, and labor, which its erection cost him, sacrificed forever. Think of the time of his loss : the house is destroyed just at the period when most required in the tempest. Think of the irremediableness

It seems like the storm-tossed house - some
symptoms here and there here -

MARCH 14.

LESSON XI.

MATT. 7: 15-29.

27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,¹ and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was² the fall of it.

28. And it came to pass, when Je-

sus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

¹ 1 Cor. 3: 13. ² Heb. 10: 26, 27. ³ Chaps. 13: 34; 22: 33. Mark 1: 22; 6: 12; 11: 18. Luke 4: 32.
⁴ Mark 1: 22. Comp. John 7: 46.

of his loss: the materials are probably borne away by the flood, and a re-erection is impossible. In sublime contrast with this, behold the stately and stable dwelling of the "*door of the word*," up upon the rock yonder. It stands unmoved amidst the severest tempests of that day. — *Thomas*.

28. When Jesus had ended these sayings; i.e., the Sermon on the Mount. That it is not a mere collection of our Saviour's sayings upon different occasions, but a single continuous discourse delivered at a certain time and place, is clear, not only from the way in which it is introduced, and from its structure and contents, but from the statement here made as to its conclusion and effect. — *Alexander*. The people were astonished. Astonished is a strong word; literally, "driven from their customary state of mind by something new and strange." At his doctrine. Teaching rather than "doctrine:" the former includes the manner as well as the matter of his instruction, both of which awakened astonishment. — *Schaff*. He taught them as one having authority. As having the right to say what is truth. Not like the scribes, telling what the Jewish rabbins or doctors taught. But Christ's teaching was like that of a master who owned none higher than himself, and plainly showed his inherent authority to speak, both as lawgiver and interpreter. — *Jacobus*. It was with the authority of one who *knows*. He knew the way to heaven, for he had been there; he knew the principles of the kingdom of God, for he was God; and he spoke therefore with the authority of an expert. It is just this speaking with authority, and not by inferences, and guesses, and hopes, which the soul needs, and which distinguishes Christ's religion from all others. Not as the scribes. The scribes taught merely as interpreters of the law of Moses. — *Cook*. As a rule, the scribe hardly ever gave his exposition without at least beginning by what had been said by Hillel or by Shammai, by Rabbi Joseph or Rabbi Meir, depending almost or altogether upon what had thus been ruled before, as much as an English lawyer depends on his precedents. In contrast with all this, our Lord fills the people with amazement by speaking to them as One who has a direct message from God. — *Ellicott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On fruit according to the tree, see Professor Phelps's "Studies in the Old Testament," pp. 208, 209. On Eastern floods, Bush's "Illustrations of Scripture," pp. 581, 582. On ver. 21, sermons by H. W. Beecher, series 9; and Professor R. D. Hitchcock, in "The New-York Pulpit." On ver. 22, on doing certain Christian works without being a Christian, there is an excellent illustration in a tract of the A. T. Soc., called "Noah's Carpenters."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Inwardly ravening wolves. Ver. 15. I have read somewhere a legend of a wretched man, one of nature's monstrosities, the tip of whose tongue was a snake's head. In his sleep the hideous reptile lay coiled within, but his breathing was a low and ominous hiss. When he attempted to speak, the monster thrust itself out in wavy vibrations, hissing, biting, stinging. A fitting symbol of the professing Christian who has the inconsistencies of his brethren at his tongue's end, and their excellences never. — *Professor Phelps*.

II. Floods in the East. — The rains and floods and winds of an Eastern monsoon afford a striking illustration of this passage. When people in those regions speak of the strength of a house, it is not by affirming, "It will last so many years," but, "It will withstand the rains: it will not be injured by the floods." For several months there is not a drop of rain, and the burning sun has loosened the ground on which the edifice stands; then all at once the torrents begin to descend, the chapped earth suddenly swells, and the change injures the foundations. Only the house founded upon a rock can withstand the rains and floods of a wet monsoon. — *Roberts's "Oriental Illustrations."*

III. Building on the sand. *An Egyptian Flood.*—A traveller writes, "It so happened that we were to witness one of the greatest calamities that have occurred in Egypt in the recollection of any one living. The Nile rose this season three feet and a half above the highest mark left by the former inundation, with uncommon rapidity, and carried off several villages and some hundreds of their inhabitants. Their cottages, being built of earth, could not stand one instant against the current; and no sooner did the water reach them than it levelled them with the ground. The rapid stream carried off all that was before it; men, women, children, cattle, corn—every thing was washed away in an instant, and left the place where the village stood without any thing to indicate that there had ever been a house on the spot."—*Burder.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 15. False professors will creep into the church. But all sheep are not wolves because some wolves look like sheep.
2. Vers. 16-19. Time and results will prove every man and every doctrine, whether they are from God.
3. That religion which produces the best disciples, and changes the most men into disciples, is the true religion.
4. Even the best trees bear some poor fruit.
5. The only way to bear a life of good fruits, is to have a good heart.
6. Vers. 15, 20. We must judge by the fruits, but not by first appearances, nor of the tree before it has had time to mature its fruit.
7. Ver. 22. Many works connected with religion, as giving, church-building, &c., can be done by those who have no religion themselves.
8. Vers. 21-23. Men are never shut out from heaven arbitrarily. Their own character is the angel with flaming sword that keeps them out of paradise.
9. Vers. 24-27. It is a terrible thing to find all our lives a failure at last.
10. The only sure foundation of character or hope is Jesus Christ.
11. Many a tree seems good and strong till some sudden gale proves that it is rotten at heart.

SECOND QUARTER.

From April 4, to June 27.

LESSON I. — APRIL 4, 1880.

THE POWER OF CHRIST. — MATT. 8 : 18-34.

TIME. — A.D. 28, autumn, some weeks after the Sermon on the Mount. It was during the second circuit of Galilee.

PLACE. — On the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum, at the north-west coast of the lake, and at Gadara, south-west of the lake.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa ; Herod Antipas, of Galilee ; Herod Philip, of other parts.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. — The death of John the Baptist in latter part of A.D. 28. He was beheaded in the castle of Machærus, beyond Jordan.

INTERVENING EVENTS. — Between the Sermon on the Mount and the incidents of this lesson the following incidents took place : —

The healing of the centurion's servant, — Capernaum (Matt. 8 : 5-13). Raising of the widow's son, — Nain (Luke 7 : 11-17). John the Baptist, in prison, sends disciples to Jesus (Matt. 11 : 2-19). Reflections of Jesus on appealing to his mighty works, — Capernaum (Matt. 11 : 20-30, subject of Lesson II.). Jesus is anointed by a woman who had been a sinner, — Capernaum ? (Luke 7 : 36-50.) Jesus, with the twelve, makes a second circuit in Galilee. The healing of a demoniac. The scribes and Pharisees blaspheme, — Galilee (Matt. 12 : 22-37. Mark 3 : 19-30). The scribes and Pharisees seek a sign ; our Lord's reflections, — Galilee (Matt. 12 : 38-45). The true disciples of Christ his nearest relatives, — Galilee (Matt. 12 : 46-50). At a Pharisee's table, Jesus denounces woes against the Pharisees and others, — Galilee (Luke 11 : 37-54). Jesus discourses to his disciples and the multitude, — Galilee (Luke 12 : 1-59). The slaughter of certain Galileans ; parable of the barren fig-tree, — Galilee (Luke 13 : 1-9). Parable of the sower, — Lake of Galilee, near Capernaum ? (Matt. 13 : 1-23, subject of Lesson III.) Parable of the tares ; other parables, — near Capernaum ? (Matt. 13 : 24-53.)

INTRODUCTION.

The eighth chapter of Matthew is called by St. Ambrose a chapter of miracles. They were wrought at different times, and are given here by St. Matthew, not in their order of time, but because they were all done at this place. Mark gives them in their order of time. Jesus sitting in a boat had been speaking to the multitudes standing on the shores of Galilee, the wonderful parables of the sower and the tares (Matt. 13). At the close of the day Jesus bids his disciples prepare to sail to the other side of the lake. At this point our lesson for to-day begins.

| | |
|--|---|
| 18. ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he ¹ gave com- | mandment to depart unto the other side. |
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¹ Mark 4 : 35. Luke 8 : 22.

EXPLANATORY.

18. When Jesus saw great multitudes. They came to Christ in crowds, having heard of his healing powers. Some came from curiosity ; others came to be healed, or to bring their sick for his cure. — *Jacobus*. He gave commandment to depart. To avoid the crowd, who may have been in an excited condition, and to find repose after a day of

19. And a¹ certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

21. And ²another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

23. ¶ And ³when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

¹ Luke 9: 57-60. ² 1 Kings 19: 20. ³ Mark 4: 36-41. Luke 8: 22-25.

conflict and labor (compare chaps. 12, 13), since this took place in the evening (Mark 4: 35). To the other side. Of the lake. — *Schaff*.

19. A certain scribe. On "scribe," see Lesson VI., ver. 20, First Quarter. Before the boat could be pushed off, a remarkable interruption occurred. Three of his listeners desired, or fancied that they desired, to attach themselves to him as disciples. The first was a scribe, who, thinking no doubt that his official rank would make him a most acceptable disciple, exclaimed with confident asseveration, "Lord, I will follow," &c. Christ did not reject the proffered service, but neither did he accept it. Perhaps "in the man's flaring enthusiasm, he saw the smoke of egotistical self-deceit." — *Farrar*.

20. Foxes have holes, &c. Caves, dens. Birds of the air have nests. More literally, "lodging-places." The two represent the lower order of animals. — *Schaff*. The Son of man. Having in himself all that belongs to man — the representative man. The name by which the Lord ordinarily in one pregnant word designates himself as the Messiah, — the Son of God manifested in the flesh of man, the second Adam. And to it belong all those conditions of humiliation, suffering, and exaltation, which it behooved the Son of man to go through. — *Alford*. Not where to lay his head. No home, no property. The scribe had not counted the cost, and, like the young ruler that had great possessions, needed to be taught. To follow the Son of man was not to be the adherent of a new sect or party, or the servant of a king marching onward to an earthly throne, but to share in poverty, privation, homelessness. — *Ellicott*. Overdrawn portrayals of our Lord's poverty are always out of place: yet He who as "Son of man" was "the crown of creation" did not possess what the humbler animals claim, a home. He did not own a dwelling, as even the foxes and birds do; but we have no reason to believe that he ever suffered from want of a lodging. — *Schaff*.

21. Another of his disciples. According to an ancient tradition this was Philip. It seems more probable that the phrase "disciple" is here used only in the more general sense of one who had loosely attached himself to Jesus as a learner. It appears from Luke (Luke 9: 59) that his request was in response to Christ's command, "Follow me." — *Abbott*. Suffer me first to go . . . bury my father. The form of the petition may mean either (1) that his father was then actually dead, and that the disciple asked leave to remain and pay the last honors to his remains, or (2) that he asked to remain with his father till his death. The latter seems by far the most probable. In the East burial followed so immediately on death, that the former would hardly have involved more than the delay of a few hours. In the latter case the request was, in fact, a plea for indefinite postponement. This, at least, fits in best with the apparent severity of our Lord's answer. — *Ellicott*.

22. Let the dead bury their dead; i.e., let those who are spiritually dead bury those who are naturally dead. — *Cook*. Let the higher duties take the precedence over the lower. He was to preach the gospel (Luke 9: 60). — *P*. It does not follow that we are to neglect what are called secular duties for those that are termed religious. Nevertheless, life presents many occasions in which duty to the living is supreme over respect for the dead. — *Abbott*.

23. Into a ship. The best authorities give, "the ship," or boat; i.e., one which, belonging possibly to Peter, or the sons of Zebedee, was always ready at their master's service. — *Ellicott*. It was the boat from which he had been teaching (Mark 4: 36). His disciples. Probably the twelve, though others followed in other boats (Mark 4: 36). — *Schaff*. In Mark 3: 9, it is described as a *small boat*, probably propelled by oars (see John 6: 19). Josephus makes it answer to our modern pinnace, or perhaps launch. — *Abbott*.

24. There arose a great tempest. The Sea of Galilee lies 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The snowy peaks of Lebanon are directly to the north. The heated tropical air of the valley is a constant invitation to the cold and heavy winds from the north, which sweep down with great fury, and in sudden storms, through the ravines of the hills, which converge to the head of the lake, and act like gigantic funnels. — *Abbott*.

The sea is his and the wind is his
 He can be trusted at all times and seasons
 a doubt? — until their feet their need
 help will be Master arm of the vessel —

APRIL 4.

LESSON I.

MATT. 8: 18-34.

24. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25. And his disciples came to him,

and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O¹ ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked² the

¹ Chap. 6: 30. ² Ps. 104: 7.

Small as the lake is, and placid in general as a molten mirror, I have repeatedly seen it quiver, and leap, and boil like a caldron, when driven by fierce winds from the eastern mountains, and the waves ran high, — high enough to fill or “cover” the ships, as Matthew has it. — *W. M. Thomson*. The ship was covered with the waves. The waves dashed over it. It was beginning to be filled with water. He was asleep. Mark says, “in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow.” A part of the boat was used for the boatman’s lying or sitting on, and was provided with a leather cushion (pillow). — *Neyer*. The stern in ancient ships was much higher than the prow; and this form continued even to the last century in England, while it is still the fashion in Egypt. The high stern made a safe and sloping place, where our Saviour slept in the storm. — *John Macgregor*. We behold him here as exactly the reverse of Jonah; the prophet asleep in the midst of a like danger through a dead conscience, the Saviour out of a pure conscience; Jonah by his presence making the danger, Jesus yielding the pledge and the assurance of deliverance from the danger. — *Trench*. When he comes down as the Incarnate One, to be man with us, tired and spent as we by life’s toils, when he lies so humbly down that the waters of a lake dash over him, and there sleeps, our feeling is in a strange maze of tenderness. Our God is so high, our glorious tent-mate in a guise so gentle, that we come to look upon him in his divine sleep more tenderly than we could even in the waking mercies and charities of his life. — *Horace Bushnell*.

25. Lord, save us: we perish. In St. Luke it is “Master, master.” In St. Mark: they awaken him with words almost of rebuke, as if he were unmindful of their safety, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” though no doubt they meant in this “we” to include their beloved Lord, as well as themselves. — *Trench*. These variations indicate the different characters of the men who were with Christ in the vessel, and make our conception of the scene at once more graphic and complete. Instead of urging them as an argument against the veracity or accuracy of the Evangelists, we ought rather to find new proofs of their honesty, and the transparent fidelity of these reports. — *S. Cox*.

26. O ye of little faith. Christ does not call them “without faith,” but “of little faith.” Believing in the midst of their unbelief, they turned to Christ in their need. They had faith; but it was like a weapon which a soldier has, but yet has mislaid, and cannot lay hold of in the moment of extremest need. The imperfection of their faith consisted not in this, that they appealed unto their Lord for help, for herein was faith; but in the excess of their terror, in their counting it possible that the ship which bore their Lord could ever truly perish. — *Trench*. Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea. This seems to have been almost, so to say, our Lord’s formula in working miracles. The fever (Luke 4: 39), the frenzy of the demoniac (Mark 9: 25), the tempest, are all treated as if they were hostile and rebel forces that needed to be restrained. St. Mark, with his usual vividness, gives the very words of the rebuke: “Peace, be still,” — literally, *be dumb, be muzzled*, as though the howling wind was a maniac to be gagged and bound. — *Ellicott*. There was a great calm. It is a solemn, a wonderful moment in the Gospel history. We have read this story so often, and read it so carelessly, that this moment in the life of Christ fails to make its due impression. The Lord rises, confronting the storm, speaks as the Master of the elements that are raging around him, — and the result is immediate. Does not his “Peace, be still,” remind us of what we read in the inspired account of creation, — “Let there be light; and there was light”? He is the Master of the laws of the universe: “all things serve him.” — *Dean Howson*. A great calm. The stopping of the wind might have been thought an accidental coincidence, for these sudden storms cease as suddenly as they arise. But it always requires time for the sea to subside: here the calm was instant. — *Abbott*.

27. The men marvelled. Meaning the disciples, and other sailors, if any were in the boat. (See Mark 4: 36.) What manner of man is this? To us, perhaps, the wonder of this miracle is not so great as in the case of some of the rest; but to them it was greater than in any other instance. They had become accustomed to other miracles, but this was a wonder of a totally different kind. No one knows better than the boatman and

winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

28. ¶ And ¹when he was come to

the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two ²possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29. And, behold, they cried out,

¹ Mark 5: 1-17. Luke 8: 26-37. ² Comp. Mark 5: 2. Luke 8: 27.

the fisherman, that he must take the weather as he finds it; that, do what he will, the winds and the waves will refuse his control. The sudden arresting of a tempest was to them an inconceivable wonder. — *Houson*. Even the winds and the sea obey him. The miracles of Jesus, as attestations that the elements of nature were plastic in his hands, are really a new key to the grandest scientific principle in the universe, — which is, that God lives, and moves, and acts, in all of nature, every instant, and that the whole creation is formed and guided in the interest of the spiritual man. This world is a place for the training of souls in a Christian immortality. Every thing material, visible, and tangible, answers to something, symbolizes something, in the soul and its spiritual life. Hence Christ must be Lord of life and death, of seas and storms, of diseases and demons, of every mystery, and might, and secret of created things. — *Rev. F. D. Huntington, D.D.* The boat is the Church of Christ, and it sails across the ocean of the world's history to the "other side" of the life beyond the grave. The wind is the blast of persecution, and the Lord of the Church seems as though he were asleep, and heard not the cry of the sufferers, and the disciples are faint-hearted and afraid. And then he hears their prayer, and the storm of the persecution ceases, and there is a great calm, during which the Church goes on its way, and men learn to feel that it carries more than Caesar and his fortunes. — *Ellicott*. Our disasters and happy fortunes, our tempests and our calms, our perils and deliverances, come to set us thinking of Him whom, in the quiet every-day course of our life, we are too apt to forget. They come to teach us that he is always with us, ordering all things according to the good pleasure of his will, and to constrain us to trust in him instead of in ourselves, by making us feel how utterly we are in his hands. — *S. Cox*.

28. Country of the Gergesenes. In Mark and Luke, "Gadarenes." The variety in names has occasioned much discussion as to the exact locality. The common view is, that the city referred to in vers. 33, 34, was *Gadara*, the capital of *Peræa*, situated south-east of the southern end of the lake. It was about seven miles from Tiberias, on a mountain near the river Hieromax; was probably inhabited by Gentiles, and is now called *Omkeis*. Another theory, now coming into favor, is, that a place called *Gerasa* or *Gergesa* (now called *Chersa* or *Gersa*) existed near the lake shore. — *Schaff*. *Chersa* or *Gersa* answers to all the conditions of the narrative: it is within a few rods of the shore; a mountain rises immediately above it, so near the shore that the swine rushing madly down could not stop, but would be inevitably driven on into the water, and drowned; the ruins of ancient tombs are still found in this mountain-side, and Capernaum is in full view on the other side, "over against it". (Luke 8: 26). — *Abbott*. Met him two possessed with devils. Mark and Luke mention but *one*, probably the fiercer of the two. He was naked (Luke 8: 27), had been chained, but had broken his chains, and had cut himself with stones until he was doubtless covered with blood. He ran to Jesus, and worshipped him, i. e., as the devils worship, not by paying him a true reverence, but by a compulsory acknowledgment of his power. See Mark for a graphic picture of his condition. — *Abbott*. It is not easy to answer the question, What was this demoniacal possession? But we may gather from the Gospel narrative some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits, who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the Devil or Satan), to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. He stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the Devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness, — sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Saviour of men for mercy; a terrible advantage taken, and a personal realization, by the malignant powers of evil, of the fierce struggle between sense and conscience in the man of morally divided life. It has been not improbably supposed, that some of these demoniacs may have arrived at their dreadful state through various progressive degrees of guilt and sensual abandonment. Lavish sin, and especially

saying, What ¹have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30. And there was a good way off

from them a herd of many swine feeding.

31. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

¹ 2 Sam. 16: 10. Luke 4: 34. Mark 1: 24.

indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness. The objection is frequently urged, How comes it that this malady is not now among us? But we cannot tell in how many cases of insanity the malady may not even now be traced to direct demoniacal possession. — *Alford*. It is morally certain that this possession never occurs but in a morally disordered person, and by a yielding of the will to evil. The soul is a castle which Satan cannot enter without permission from within. — *P*. Coming out of the tombs. According to the other accounts, their abode; chosen "from a morbid craving for the terrible." One of the early fathers speaks of such caves near Gadara, and modern travellers confirm the statement. They were hewn out of the chalky rock, and afforded shelter. — *Schaff*. Exceeding fierce. See the terribly graphic account of Mark. The demoniac was without clothes, which, though related only by St. Luke, yet appears from Mark's narrative, where he is described as sitting *clothed* and in his right mind, at Jesus' feet, after his cure. — *Alford*.

29. They cried out, &c. Comparing this account with Mark and Luke, the facts appear to be that the maniac made a rush towards Jesus and the twelve, perhaps purposing to destroy them; that Christ stopped him by word of command, requiring the evil spirits to leave the man, and that the expostulation given in this verse was the Devil's response to that command. Christ then asks his name, and is told it is "Legion." — *Abbott*. What have we to do with thee? Literally, "What (is) to us and thee," what have we in common? The language of the demons, who recognized him as the Son of God. Jesus, thou Son of God. Persons called demonized recognized Jesus as the Messiah of God. We find them *all agreed* in acknowledging Jesus as the holy anointed of God; we find them *agreed in advance* of the popular voice; we find them thus agreed although the popular voice, from which some of them *might* have received their impressions, was *the other way*. These men must have made their remarkable confessions by a preternatural influence common to them all, which controlled their minds and shaped their utterance. — *S. Hopkins*. To torment us before the time? Herein the true devilish spirit speaks out, which counts it a torment not to be suffered to torment others, and an injury done to itself when it is no more permitted to be injurious to others. "Before the time" is the confession on their part of a time coming, a time, too, not to be averted, when there shall be an entire victory of the kingdom of light over that of darkness, and when all which belong unto the latter shall be shut up in the abyss (Rev. 20: 10), when all power of harming shall be taken away from them. And all Scripture agrees with this, that the judgment of the angels is yet to come (1 Cor. 6: 3). What the unclean spirits deprecate here is the bringing-in, by anticipation, of that final doom. — *Trench*. At this stage, our Lord asked the question, "What is thy name?" (Mark 5: 9). The most terrible phenomenon of possession, as of many forms of insanity, was the divided consciousness which appears in this case. Now the demon speaks, and now the man. The question would recall to the man's mind that he once had a human name, with all its memories of human fellowship. "My name is Legion, for we are many." The irresistible might, the full array of the Roman legion, with its 6,000 soldiers, seemed to the demoniac the one adequate symbol of the wild, uncontrollable impulses of passion and of dread that were sweeping through his soul. — *Ellicott*.

30. A good way off. Mark says, "Nigh unto the mountains;" Luke, "There — on the mountain." The miracle probably took place on the plain. A herd of many swine. According to Mark, 2,000. These swine were doubtless owned by inhabitants of Gadara. Swine were to Jews unclean animals, and it was unlawful for them to eat them (Lev. 11: 7). The Jews were forbidden by their own laws to keep them, even for the purpose of traffic. — *Barnes*.

31. The devils besought him . . . suffer us to go . . . into the herd of swine. This was in response to Christ's command to the evil spirits to come out of the man. See Mark and Luke. — *J. F. and B.*

32. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine; and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33. And they that kept them fled,

and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

1 & Kings 17: 18. Luke 5: 8.

32. He said unto them, Go. The owners, if Jews, drove an illegal trade; if heathens, they insulted the national religion: in either case the permission was just. — *J. F. and B.* The wicked Satan (Job 1: 11) and his ministers and servants are sometimes heard, and the very granting of their petitions issues in their greater confusion and loss. So was it now: these evil spirits had their prayers heard, but only to their ruin. — *Trench.* They went into the herd of swine. Men have asked sometimes, in scorn, why the word was spoken — why permission was given for a destructive work, which seemed alike needless and fruitless. We are at least on the right track in suggesting that only in some such way could the man be delivered from the inextricable confusion between himself and the unclean spirits in which he had been involved. Not till he saw the demoniac forces that had oppressed him transferred to the bodies of other creatures, and working on them the effects which they had wrought on him, could he believe in his own deliverance. Those who measure rightly the worth of a human spirit thus restored to itself, to its fellow-men, and to God, will not think that the destruction of brute life was too dear a price to pay for its restoration. Other subordinate ends — such, e.g., as that it was a penalty on those who kept the unclean beasts for their violation of the law, or that it taught men that it was through their indulgence of the swinish nature in themselves that they became subject to the darker and more demoniac passions, — have been suggested with more or less plausibility. — *Ellicott.*

33, 34. The whole city came out to meet Jesus. The people of Gergesa, and of all the neighboring district, flocked out to see the mighty Stranger. What livelier or more decisive proof of his power and his beneficence could they have had than the sight which met their eyes? The filthy and frantic demoniac, who had been the terror of the country, was now calm as a child. Some charitable hand had flung an outer robe over his naked figure, and he was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. — *Farrar.* They besought him . . . he would depart. "And they were afraid," — more afraid of that holy Presence than of the previous furies of the possessed. The man, indeed, was saved; but what of that, considering that some of their 2,000 unclean beasts had perished! The greed and gluttony of every apostate Jew and low-bred Gentile in the place were clearly imperilled by receiving such a one as they saw that Jesus was. With disgraceful and urgent unanimity they entreated and implored him to leave their coasts. And yet he did not leave them in anger. One deed of mercy had been done there; one sinner had been saved; from one soul the unclean spirits had been cast out. And, just as the united multitude of the Gadarenes had entreated for his absence, so the poor saved demoniac entreated henceforth to be with him. But Jesus would fain leave one more, one last opportunity for those who had rejected him. On others, for whose sake miracles had been performed, he had enjoined silence. On this man — since he was now leaving the place — he enjoined publicity. "Go home," he said, "to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And so the demoniac of Gergesa became the first great missionary to the region of Decapolis, bearing in his own person the confirmation of his words. — *Farrar's Life of Christ.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On vers. 19-22 see sermons by H. W. Beecher, Series 7, "God First;" A. Barnes's "Way of Salvation;" Farrar's "Fall of Man." On vers. 23-27, sermon by W. Jay, "Disciples in a Storm;" F. W. Maurice's "Lord of the Winds and the Sea;" Beecher, Series 2, "Throwing Oil on the Sea;" "Illustrated Christian Weekly," May 3, 1879. On demoniacs see Trench on "Miracles;" Abbott's "Jesus of Nazareth," chap. 13; Ray's "Medical Jurisprudence," pp. 202-260; Maudsley's "Physiology of the Mind," pp. 306-316; Forbes Winslow's "Obscure Diseases of the Brain and Mind," pp. 179-211.

See a very fine setting-forth of this miracle, for children, in "Power of Grace," pp 176-187 (C. M. Saxton, N.Y., 1858); "Land and Book," vol. i. pp. 212, 213; and on Gadara, vol. ii. pp. 34-38.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Vers. 19-22. **Almost ready to obey.**—Dr. William Taylor tells a story of some sailors going ashore from their ship, and returning intoxicated; they entered their little boat to row to the ship, but they rowed till morning without reaching it. Daylight showed that they had not loosened the rope that held them to the wharf. Many a man would follow Christ, but he is fastened by some one sin, some bad habit, some fear or neglect; but one alone unforsaken will keep him forever from Christ.—*P.*

II. **Christ in the storm.**—Vers. 23-27. It was a touching answer of a Christian sailor, when asked why he remained so calm in a fearful storm, when the sea seemed ready to devour the ship. He was not sure that he could swim. "But," he said, "though I sink, I shall only drop into the hollow of my Father's hand; for he holds all these waters there.—*William Arnot.*

III. In the pictures, Cole's "Voyage of Life," there is a guardian angel; but in the picture of "Manhood" this guardian is unseen by the man on the rough tide. Christ is with us, though we do not always see him.

IV. The change in the demoniac well illustrates the change in conversion. Many transformations illustrate it,—the charcoal into the diamond, the parings of horses' hoofs into beautiful blue dyes, the washings of coal-gas and the offal of the streets into fragrant odors and flavors. The soil is changed into flowers and fruits, black coal into light and heat, rags into finest paper; but God's transformations in conversion are more wonderful still.—*P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 19. Sudden convictions and resolutions are of no avail, unless we obey them. ✓
2. Vers. 20-22. What small things keep men from following Christ.
3. An unwilling mind never wants for an excuse.—*Henry.*
4. Christ must be first, and there will be time for all other duties.
5. Vers. 23-27. It is safe to go wherever Christ leads us, and it is safe only there.
6. Jesus is often with us where we do not recognize his presence. He seems sleeping.
7. Christ leads his disciples into the storm to increase their faith, and give them the victory.
8. Ver. 25. No one is able to be his own savior from sin and trouble.
9. "He who thinks he hath no need of Christ, hath too high thoughts of himself. He who thinks Christ cannot help him, hath too low thoughts of Christ."—*Mason.*
10. Ver. 28. How terrible is the power of sin when it gains complete control! Here is a glimpse of what all sin will do unless forsaken.
11. Ver. 29. It is a torment to wicked men to be prevented from tormenting others.
12. It is not knowledge, but love, that distinguishes saints from devils.—*Henry.*
13. Ver. 32. Sinful riches soonest flee.
14. Christ's presence would put an end to ill-gotten and ill-used wealth.
15. Therefore wicked men hate to have Christ near them; they drive him far from them.
16. The wonderful change religion works in us.

LESSON II.—APRIL 11, 1880.

THE INVITATION OF CHRIST.—MATT. 11: 20-30.

TIME.—Summer or autumn of A. D. 28; a little before last lesson, just before Christ began his second tour of Galilee, and just after the Sermon on the Mount.

PLACE.—Probably at Capernaum in Galilee.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (15th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (3d year); Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee (32d year); Herod Philip, governor of other parts (32d year).

INTERVENING HISTORY.—The healing of the centurion's servant, just after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 8: 5-13. Luke 7: 1-10). Raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7: 11-17). John the Baptist in prison sends disciples to Jesus (vers. 2-19).

20. Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21. Woe¹ unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!² for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre³ and Sidon,

¹ Luke 10: 13-15. ² John 1: 44. ³ Chap. 15: 21. Mark 3: 8. Luke 6: 17.

INTRODUCTION.

And now the time was already come for Christ to reveal himself as a *judge*, to those who would not accept him as a Saviour. The cities of Galilee most favored by his ministry—Chorazin, Bethsaida, and especially Capernaum—are doomed to a far heavier judgment than Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah. Such words, uttered now over Galilee, as afterward over Judæa and Jerusalem, show the wounded sympathies of the human friend, as well as the just indignation of the divine judge. — *William Smith.*

EXPLANATORY.

20. Then began he. This occasion marked a change in Christ's ministry, from a mere proclamation that the kingdom is at hand, to a warning of divine judgments against the people for rejecting it. — *Abbott.* To upbraid. To chide, to rebuke for something wrong or disgraceful, to reproach. — In all the reproofs of Jesus there is an exaltation and calmness which renders them more terrible than if they were an outburst of sudden passion. It is not angered ambition, but repulsed kindness, that speaks. There is sadness in the severity. The very denunciations seem to mourn. In a pure soul, indignation at evil is not an alternative or mere accompaniment of benevolence, but is benevolence itself acting for the preservation of happiness. It seems impossible that one should be good, and not abhor that which destroys goodness. — *H. W. Beecher.* The cities (of Galilee) wherein most of his mighty works were done. The Greek word here translated "mighty works" is elsewhere translated "miracles" (Mark 9: 39. Acts 2: 22). — *Abbott.* Because they repented not. The object of his miracles, as his preaching, was to produce repentance. Compare Matt. 4: 17. — *Abbott.* Much knowledge and little practice, much light and little heat, many leaves and slender fruit, much "drinking-in of the rain that cometh off upon us," and scanty produce, these things suit not together: of such God saith, "It is rejected and nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." — *Dr. Pusey.*

21. Woe unto thee (not a wishing of woe to them, but a statement of the fact that woe must come to them, doing as they did), Chorazin . . . Bethsaida! It is singular enough that no miracles are recorded in the Gospels as wrought at either of these cities. — *Ellicott.* But there is testimony in Luke 4: 23, and John 21: 25, that Jesus did many miracles not recorded, and some doubtless were done here; but perhaps not so many as would have been but for their unbelief. And it is certain they saw many of the miracles, a large part of which were done in this neighborhood. — *P.* Chorazin is nowhere mentioned except here, and in Luke 10: 12-16. The latest researches identify it with Khorazy, two miles north of Capernaum. A ride of three miles westward along the shore of the Sea of Galilee brought me to the ruins of a large town. It was encompassed by such a dense jungle of thorns, thistles, and rank weeds, that I had to employ some shepherds to open a passage for me. Clambering to the top of a shattered wall, I was able to overlook the whole sight. What a scene of desolation was that! Not a house, not a wall, not a solitary pillar, remains standing. Broken columns, hewn stones, sculptured slabs of marble, and great shapeless heaps of rubbish, half-concealed by thorns and briars, alone served to mark the site of a great and rich city. Yet that is the place where Chorazin once stood! Chorazin heard but rejected the words of mercy from the lips of its Lord, and he pronounced its doom. — *Dr. J. L. Porter.* The Bethsaida here spoken of was probably that on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The name in Aramaic signifies "house of fish;" and it was therefore, we may believe, on the shore, and not far from the two cities with which it is here grouped. — *Ellicott.* It was the birthplace of Simon Peter, Andrew, and Philip. — These two cities appear to be singled out to denote the whole region in which they lay, — a region favored with the Redeemer's presence, teaching, and works, above every other. Tyre and Sidon. Ancient and celebrated commercial cities, on the north-eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, lying north of Palestine, and the latter the northernmost. As their wealth and prosperity engendered luxury and its concomitant evils, — irreligion and moral degeneracy, — their overthrow was repeatedly foretold in ancient prophecy, and once and again fulfilled by victorious enemies. Yet they were rebuilt, and at this time

they would have repented long ago¹ in sackcloth and ashes.

22. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23. And thou, Capernaum,² which

art³ exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought⁴ down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24. But⁵ I say unto you, That it

¹ Jon. 3: 6. ² Chap. 4: 13. ³ Luke 4: 23, 31. ⁴ Comp. Gen. 11: 24. Isa. 14: 13. ⁵ Isa. 14: 15. Ezek. 26: 20; 31: 14; 32: 18, 24. ⁶ Chap. 10: 15.

were in a flourishing condition. — *J. F. and B. Long ago.* Either, the cities would have changed their character in ages past, or the present inhabitants would have repented speedily. In sackcloth and ashes. The symbol of mourning and repentance (compare Jon. 3: 5-9, on the repentance of Nineveh). The costume of mourners resembled a sack with holes for the arms, and it was usual to strew ashes upon the head. — *Schaff.* Sackcloth was a coarse kind of cloth of a dark color, made from goat's or camel's hair.

22. It shall be more tolerable. Over and above their immediate import, the words are full of meaning as throwing light on the ultimate law of God's dealings with the heathen world. Men are judged not only according to what they have done, but according to what they might or would have done under other circumstances and conditions of life. In other words, they are judged according to their opportunities. — *Ellicott.* In the day of judgment, than for you. The doom of the cities in which Jesus taught and displayed his striking miracles would be far more awful than that of other cities, even the most wicked of ancient times, because their advantages were unspeakably greater, and consequently their guilt was greater. How fearful the application of this principle to those in Christian lands who neglect the great salvation! See Heb. 2: 3. — *Ripley.*

23. Thou Capernaum. On the north-west corner of the Sea of Tiberias. Though it was once a city of renown, and the metropolis of all Galilee, the site it occupied is now uncertain. Dr. Robinson supposes that the site of the ancient city is a place now called Ran Minyeh; Dr. Thomson supposes it was at a place now called Tell Hum. — *Barnes.* Which art exalted unto heaven. By the residence and works of Jesus. — *De Wette.* This city had already witnessed more of our Lord's recorded wonders than any other. — *Ellicott.* Height of place gives opportunity of temptation. They had need to stand fast that stand high: there is both more danger of their falling, and more hurt in their fall. — *Bishop Hall.* Brought down to hell. The people having been highly exalted in privileges, which they abused, are doomed to a corresponding depth of woe. The terms *heaven* and *hell* are often used as here in antithesis to each other, to denote simply the opposite extremes of space, or of exaltation and degradation of a moral kind (Ps. 139: 8. Job 11: 8. Isa. 7: 11). — *Binney.* Temporal judgments have been linked with the spiritual degradation here predicted; the very sites of these cities are disputed. — *Schaff.* Had been done in Sodom. Sodom was once the chief city of Palestine, situated in the plain south of the Dead Sea. It was destroyed on account of its wickedness, by fire; and the Dead Sea flowed over the place, and still remains there. Its name is a synonyme for wickedness. For its history, see Genesis, chaps. 13-19. — *P.*

24. It shall be more tolerable, &c. The moral meaning of these woes and their practical application is plain. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12: 48). In the divine judgment the flagrant vices of ignorance are less culpable than the rejection of pardon and spiritual life by those educated in the gospel. The historical fulfilment of these warnings, in the destruction of the cities, points forward to a further spiritual fulfilment; for the declaration is that it *shall be* more tolerable for the land of Sodom *in that day*, which evidently looks to a judgment of Sodom, — i.e., of its people, yet to come; but the judgment on the place, *as a place*, had long since been fulfilled. If Tyre and Sidon, and Sodom and Gomorrah, would have repented if further opportunity and greater manifestations had been awarded them, the question naturally occurs, Why were these not given? The answer is, that sufficient opportunity and sufficient warnings were given; and, as no laborer in the vineyard has a right to call God to account for giving a penny to all alike, so no outcast has a right to call God to account for not giving all the same opportunity. If still the disciple, perplexed, asks, why such seeming inequalities in the administration of divine grace; why the gift of Christ to the cities of Galilee, and the withholding of Christ from the cities of the plain; the gift of Christianity to Europe, and the withholding of it from India, — there is no other answer than, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." — *Abbott.*

since God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes. —
 change it - must be for the best -

shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25. At¹ that time Jesus answered² and said, I thank thee, O Father,³ Lord of heaven and earth, because⁴

thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed⁵ them unto babes.

26. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27. All⁶ things are delivered unto

¹ Comp. Luke 10: 21, 22. ² Chaps. 17: 4.; 22: 1. Acts 10: 46. ³ Luke 23: 34. John 11: 41; 12: 27, 28. ⁴ Job 37: 24. ⁵ 1 Cor. 1: 19-27. ⁶ Ps. 8: 2. Chap. 21: 16. ⁷ Chap. 28: 18. John 3: 35; 13: 3; 17: 2. ⁸ 1 Cor. 15: 27.

25. At that time. Probably immediately after the denunciation just recorded. — *Schaff*. At the same period in which Jesus began to pronounce woes against the cities of Galilee, he commenced to give to his ministry a tenderer aspect toward the weary and heavy-laden. — *Abbott*. Nothing strikes me more in the Gospel than the double character of austerity and love, of severe purity and tender sympathy, which constantly appears in the actions and words of Jesus Christ, in every thing that touches the revelation of God and mankind. To Christ the law of God is absolute, sacred; the violation of the law and sin are odious to him; but the sinner irresistibly attracts and moves him. This harmony of severity and love, this union of holiness and sympathy, is Heaven's revelation of the nature of Jesus himself, — of the God-man. — *M. Guisot*. Jesus answered. The *answered* refers to the words which have immediately preceded: the whole ascription of praise is an answer to the mysterious dispensations of God's providence, above recorded. — *Alford*. An unexpressed feeling would arise in his hearers, why God should treat different places so differently. He answered this feeling: he made an answer to the strangeness of these facts. — *P*. I thank thee. Rather, "acknowledge." It is here a most significant expression, readily suggesting at the same time ideas of praise, thanksgiving, and assent, or acquiescence. It is not mere gratitude that Christ expresses, as a man, but approbation and concurrence as a divine person. — *Alexander*. O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Christ addresses God as his "Father," not as his "Lord." The term, "Lord of heaven and earth," is peculiarly appropriate, since he was about to mention another evidence of God's sovereignty. — *Schaff*. Hast hid. Without doubt we have here to understand a direct, yet at the same time a holy, wise, and loving, disposition of things by the Father, one which is thoroughly grounded in the nature of things. To the haughty man it is morally impossible to bow before Christ. God has connected the participation in his kingdom with a condition which lay within the reach even of the most simple: namely, lowliness, and humility of heart. Wise and prudent men wantonly made themselves unrecipients of this blessing. It is not for this hiding in and of itself, however deserved it may be, that our Lord gives thanks, but for this, that, even if these things were hidden to the wise, they did not remain concealed for all. — *Van Oosterzee*. Our Lord does not say that God denied means of salvation to any; but he thanks him because he has revealed to the apostles what he has hidden from the Pharisees, and thus punishes pride and rewards meekness. — *Wordsworth*. These things. These mysterious arrangements, by which the sinner is condemned in his pride and unbelief, the humble and childlike saved, and God justified when he saves and condemns. — *Alford*. The mysterious operation of that divine power which destroys the cities of Galilee, and raises up other nations to become light-bearers, as set forth in Matt. 21: 43. — *Abbott*. Wise. The men who pride themselves upon their speculative or philosophical attainments. Prudent. The men of worldly shrewdness, — the clever, the sharp-witted, the men of affairs. The distinction is a natural one, and was well understood. (See 1 Cor. 1: 19; &c.) Hast revealed them unto babes. To babe-like men; men of unassuming docility; men who, conscious that they know nothing, and have no right to sit in judgment on the things that belong to their peace, determine simply to "hear what God the Lord will speak." — *J. F. and B*. Observe, that the contrast is not with the unwise and imprudent, but with babes. The doctrine conveyed, then, is that religious truth is *not acquired by any mere intellectual process, however good in itself*; but it is revealed to childlike humility and docility. The babes here are the disciples, unfamiliar with the wisdom of the scribes (Acts 4: 13), and disregarding worldly prudence in leaving all to follow Christ. — *Abbott*.

26. Even so, Father. Take up the great enigma of the doings of God, and the destinies of men, at what end you may; adopt whatever method of solution you may prefer; make your way through the difficulties that beset you, as far as you can: sooner or later you reach the point where explanation fails, and where there is nothing left but to join with him who said, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." — *Hanna*.

me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father,¹ save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28. Come² unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,³ and I will give you rest.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn⁴ of me; for I am meek⁵ and

¹ John 7: 29; 8: 19; 10: 15; 17: 25. ² John 7: 37. ³ Comp. Luke 11: 46. ⁴ John 13: 15. Phil. 2: 5. ⁵ 1 Pet. 2: 21. ⁶ John 2: 6. ⁷ Zech. 9: 9. ⁸ Cor. 10: 1. Phil. 2: 7, 8.

27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father. He does not say, "They are revealed," — as to one who knew them not, and was an entire stranger to them, save as they were discovered to him, — but, "They are 'delivered over,' or 'committed to me of my Father,'" meaning the whole administration of the kingdom of grace, with unlimited powers. — *J. F. and B.* It means that Christ has control over all things, for the good of his Church; that the government of the universe is committed to him as *Mediator*, that he may redeem his people, and guide them to glory (Eph. 1: 20-22). — *Barnes.* No man knoweth the Son. That is, such is the nature of the Son of God, such the mystery of the union between the divine and human nature, such his exalted character as *divine*, that no mortal can fully comprehend him. None but God *fully* knows him. — *Barnes.* This is one of the most convincing testimonies for the true Godhead of Christ. One who was only a created spirit, or an immaculate man, could not possibly, without blasphemy against God, testify this of himself. — *Van Oosterzee.* Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son. Jesus is the only being who *could* know God fully, having seen him as he is, being one with him. No man knows the Father, except he add to the knowledge gained from other sources, that special knowledge of God's grace and love which the Son affords, nor unless his study of nature, &c., is under the direction of and in submission to the Son. Philosophy is in so far right that, to the Christless, God is the Unknowable. For the way in which the Son reveals the Father, and to whom he will reveal him, see John 14: 15-24. — *Abbott.* To whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The Son is the revealer of this mystery, in which all revelation centres. Though so profound, it is the most practical truth. To know him, he must be revealed in us, as well as to us, by this Saviour. — *Riddle.*

28. Come unto me. This invitation loses half its meaning, taken out of the connection in which it was spoken. We understand and appreciate its significance only by looking upon it as grounded on and flowing out of what Christ had the moment before been saying, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Simply that they might so freely, fully come unto us, he has all, holds all as the treasurer of the kingdom, the steward of the divine mercies. And he holds all under the condition that there shall be the freest, most gracious dispensing of all, that whoever asks shall get, that no needy one shall ever come to him and be sent unrelieved away. — *Hanna.* Observe the utter incongruity of such an invitation as that here given, and its accompanying promise, in the mouth of a merely inspired prophet, or even an angel or archangel. Compare with it John 1: 29, and Isa. 53: 4; and observe that Christ carries not only our sins, but also our griefs and our sorrows. — *Abbott.* Come unto me. We must come to Christ, — to his love, to his morality, to his kingdom: they cannot come over to our state, but we must come over to his. All ye that labor (are weary with toil and striving), and are heavy laden (burdened with sin and sorrow). The active and passive sides of human misery. Doubtless outward and bodily misery is not shut out; but the promise, *rest to your souls*, is only a spiritual promise. — *Alford.* All. Not this or that person, but all that are in anxiety, in sorrows, in sins, come — not that I may call you to account, but that I may do away your sins; come — not that I want your honor, but that I want your salvation. — *Chrysostom.* I will give you rest. The *I* is emphasized in the Greek. He gives what no one else can give. — *Ellicott.* The true rest comes, not from outward circumstances, nor from the decision of vexed problems, but is within the soul, — in its moral convictions, in its spiritual affections, in its trust and hope; and, when these are fixed upon God, no disturbance of affairs, no perplexities of Providence, no mysteries of faith, can really disquiet the mind. — *J. P. Thompson, D.D.* In the performance of duty, in meekness, in trust in God, is our rest, our only rest. — *Robertson.* It is rest from all self-seeking; rest from all secular anxieties; rest from mere legal obedience; rest from all forebodings of conscience. — *Thomas.*

29. Take my yoke upon you. This is a figure taken from the use of oxen, and hence signifying to labor for one, or in the service of any one. — *Barnes.* To take Christ's yoke upon one, then, is to enter into his service. A yoke of some kind we all are born under, or willingly take on. Some assume the yoke of a single passion; and if that passion

I am able to give you rest to your souls -
We shall be more than conquerors - through him
who loved us -

lowly in heart: and¹ ye shall find rest
unto your souls.

30. For my yoke *is* easy,² and my
burden is light.

¹ Jer. 6: 16. ² 1 John 5: 3.

be a strong one, such as covetousness, it turns the man into a slave, making him a mere beast of burden,—time for nothing, care for nothing, taste for nothing, joy in nothing but in working for it and under it. Nor does it mend the matter, if, instead of one, there be many such yokes about the neck. It is to all mankind, as bearers of the one yoke or the many, that Jesus says, "Take up my yoke, throw off these others,—the yoke of pride, of covetousness, of sensuality, of worldliness, of ambition, of self-indulgence,—take on that yoke which consists in devotedness to me and to duty, in a life of self-restraint, in a struggle with all that is evil, a cultivation of all that is beautiful and good and holy."—

Hanna. Learn of me (from my example and from my teaching). Christ is the teacher, and his disciples are the scholars in his school. — *P.* When we take the yoke of Christ,

we are at the same time to learn of him, we are to drink in of his spirit; and the new spirit of the Master will make the restraints of the Master easy, and his burden light. — *James Drummond*. For I am meek. Meekness is a spirit the opposite of the ambitious and self-seeking one. The root of meekness is the dominance of spiritual over earthly desires.

Lowly in heart; i.e., of a heart to condescend to men of low estate. The qualification, even of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our divine teacher, is not so much his infinite wisdom as his infinite meekness and condescension. — *Abbott*. Ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Quoted from Jer. 6: 16. Thus we have it revealed here, that the rest and joy of the Christian soul is to become like Christ, to attain, by his teaching, this meekness and lowliness of his. — *Alford*. Christ does not promise a rest of inaction, neither that the thorns shall be converted into roses, nor that the trials of life shall be removed. It matters not in what circumstances men are, whether high or low, never shall the rest of Christ be found in ease and self-gratification; never, throughout eternity, will there be rest found in a life of freedom from duty; the paradise of the sluggard, where there is no exertion, the heaven of the coward, where there is no difficulty to be opposed, is not the rest of Christ. The Redeemer gives rest by giving us the spirit and power to bear the burden. — *Robertson*.

36. My yoke is easy. The Greek has a wider range of meaning—good, helpful, kind, profitable. — *Ellicott*. Obedience, indeed ("the easy yoke"), he does require; but an obedience which is easy and pleasant, flowing spontaneously from the divine life within, and rendered in the spirit of love. — *Neander*. All virtue and all religion imply restraint,—the restraint of our bad passions and inclinations, and subjection to laws. Let any one compare the restraints which Christ's service imposes, with the burdensome and expensive ceremonies of the Jews (see Acts 15: 10), or with the religious rites of the heathen everywhere, and let his laws and requirements be compared with the laws which *sin* imposes on its votaries,—the laws of fashion, and honor, and sensuality,—and he will feel that religion is "freedom" (John 8: 36). "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves besides." It is easier to be a Christian than a sinner; and, of all the yokes ever imposed on men, that of the Redeemer is the lightest. — *Barnes*. The yoke of Christ is like the plumage of a bird, which adds to its weight, but enables it to soar to the sky. — *Wordsworth*. My burden light. In comparison with the burdens that sin lays upon us, Christ's burden is indeed light. It is also made light because he helps us to bear it; because he promises it shall work out good; because of the "eternal weight of glory" it will work in us through him. Christ takes away the burden of sin by forgiveness, the burden of work by loving motives and the power of the spirit, the burden of sorrow by faith. — *P.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Christ's yoke as easy, see Jacox' "Secular Illustrations of Scripture," Series 1, pp. 60-70; Wordsworth's ode to "Duty." Thompson's "Seeds and Sheaves," p. 99, contains a beautiful little story on this text, vers. 28-30. "The Two Feasts of Cyrus" (see Abbott's Histories, volume on Cyrus) are a fine illustration of the yoke of Christ and of the world. Sermons by F. W. Robertson, vol. v., "Rest;" Barnes, in "Way of Salvation;" H. E. Manning; Spurgeon, Series 6 and 9; H. W. Beecher, Series 2; Walker and Wolfe, in "Masterpieces."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The yoke of Christ and of the world. It costs something to be a Christian: it costs much more to be a sinner. Some complained of the missionaries in Harpoot,

because they required each convert, on joining the church, to promise to give away one-tenth of his income; but they replied that this was but a small part of what their heathenism used to cost them. Even in Massachusetts five times as much money is spent for strong drink as for schools or churches. It may cost something to go to church; but in our church, with its large expenses, each service costs those who go but eight cents, with several meetings each week thrown in gratis. What worldly pleasure or haunt of sin serves its disciples so cheap? If any church should require of its members the expenses, the vulgarities, which fashion requires of its votaries, it would be hooted out of existence. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 20. Love warns and foretells danger to those who refuse the invitations to repent.

2. Ver. 22. The punishment for sin is terrible and certain to those who will not turn to God.

3. The mighty works which prove effectual to reform some have no saving effect upon others.

4. The greater the grace, the heavier the judgment if neglected. The brighter the summer day, the louder the thunder-storm. — *Zesius*. The higher the precipice, the more fatal the fall. — *Henry*.

5. Ver. 25. Self-conceited wisdom, like self-righteousness, keeps men from real wisdom.

6. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. — *Solomon*.

7. The childlike spirit that wants to learn and obey is the gate to true wisdom and knowledge.

8. Ver. 26. There are many mysteries in life as to which we can only trust our Father's wisdom and love.

9. *The Divine approval is the highest reason.* If good in our Father's sight, (1) it must be wisest and best; (2) it ought to be good to us.

10. The work of Christianity is to relieve and to save and to bless.

11. Ver. 28. Christ is the only source of rest to the soul, — rest from sin, rest from anxiety, rest from trouble.

12. Christianity requires moral effort on our part: we must *come*, or it will not avail.

13. Ver. 29. Every man must be under some yoke. The yoke or service of God is free, easy, glad, loving, helpful. "It is resignation and contentment that are best calculated to lead us safely through life." — *W. Von Humboldt*.

14. Christ's best lessons must be *learned*: they cannot be given.

15. It is quite as important to learn to be humble-minded and self-sacrificing and forgiving, as to learn logarithms and equinoxes. — *Abby M. Diaz*.

LESSON III. — APRIL 18, 1880.

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. — MATT. 13: 24-30, 37-43.

TIME. — Autumn of A.D. 28, just before the incidents of Lesson I., during the second tour through Galilee.

PLACE. — Shores of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum (?). On account of the multitudes of the people, and better to command attention, Jesus steps into a fishing-boat by the shore, from which he speaks.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee; Herod Philip, governor of other parts.

CIRCUMSTANCES. — Christ is now going with his disciples on his second tour among the towns and villages of Galilee, teaching and preaching, and healing the people. He now begins a new method of teaching; and by parables he shows more clearly the great truths of his kingdom.

INTRODUCTION.

The seven parables related in this chapter are clearly indicated by ver. 53 to have been all spoken on one and the same occasion. The first four of these parables appear to have

24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field :

25. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.—

26. But when the blade was sprung

¹ Mark 4: 26-29.

been spoken to the multitude from the ship (the interpretation of the parable of the sower being interposed) ; the last three, to the disciples in the house.—*Alford*. The malignant accusation of the Pharisees, the plots against his life, the absence of real support where he might most have looked for it, the opposition roused by the directness of his teaching,—this led to his presenting that teaching in a form which was at once more attractive, less open to attack, better as an intellectual and spiritual training for his disciples, better also as a test of character, and therefore an education for the multitude.—*Ellicott*. A measure of logical order and reciprocal relation has always been observed in this cluster of parables. The first six readily fall into three successive, well-defined pairs, and the seventh stands clearly designated by its subject as an appropriate conclusion. The first pair exhibit the relations of the kingdom to the several classes of intelligent creatures with which, as adversaries or subjects, it comes into contact. The second pair exhibit the progress of the kingdom from small beginnings to a glorious issue. The third pair exhibit the preciousness of the kingdom in comparison with all other objects of desire ; and the remaining one teaches that the good and evil which intermingle on earth will be completely and finally separated in the great day.—*Arnot*.

EXPLANATORY.

24. Another parable. *What is a parable?* The original Greek word signifies, literally, *placing side by side*—hence, a comparison. A parable is a *fictitious narrative, true to nature, yet undeceptive, veiling a spiritual truth, under a symbol, for the purpose of conveying it to minds reluctant or indifferent*. It differs from the proverb in being a *narrative*, from the fable in being *true to nature*, from the myth in being *undeceptive*, from the allegory in that it *veils the spiritual truth*.—*Abbott*. The kingdom of heaven. That new order of things which Christ came to establish.—*Ellicott*. See ver. 2, Lesson III., First Quarter. It is God's organization of society on this earth, including both the religious and secular departments.—*Rev. Jesse H. Jones*. Sowed good seed, i.e., of a good kind, and good of its kind.

25. While men slept, his enemy came. Our Lord did not here invent a form of malice without example, but alluded to one which, though elsewhere unnoted in Scripture, was familiar enough to his hearers ; one so easy of execution, involving so little risk, and yet effecting so great and so lasting a mischief, that it is not strange, that, where cowardice and malice met, this should often have been the shape in which they displayed themselves.—



TARES AND WHEAT.

Trench. Sowed tares. The tare abounds all over the East, and is a great nuisance to the farmer. It resembles the American *cheat*, but the head does not droop like cheat, nor does it branch out like oats. The grain, also, is smaller, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. It is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat, grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Of course the farmers are very anxious to exterminate it, but this is nearly impossible.—*W. M. Thomson*. The tares and wheat both belong to the special group of wheat-like grasses. Their structure, mode, and conditions of growth are almost the same ; and it is only when the fruit is formed that the impostor is detected by its smaller and darker ear. The darnel, or tare, is the only species of grass that is possessed of deleterious properties. If its seeds are mixed with wheat, the bread thus produced causes nausea, giddiness, paralysis, and in extreme cases even death.—*Macmillan*. The practice is not unknown even in England at present. *Alford* speaks of his own field being sown with charlock over the wheat.

And went his way. There is something very expressive in this. He knew the soil ; he knew how the seed would take root, and grow. He had only to sow the seed, and let alone. So Satan knows the soil in which he sows his doctrine. He knows that in the human heart it will take deep and rapid root. It needs but little culture. Grace needs

up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said

unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29. But he said, Nay; lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye to-

constant attendance and care. Error and sin and hypocrisy are the native products of the human heart, and, when left alone, start up with deadly luxuriance. — *Barnes*.

26, 27. Weeks pass, showers fall; the seed springs, and covers all the ground with beautiful green. The owner visited his field from time to time in spring, and thought it promised well; but at that period of summer, still a good while before harvest, when the ears of grain begin to appear, some of the farmer's servants, looking narrowly into the quality of the crop, discovered that a large proportion of it was dandelion. Forthwith they reported the sad intelligence to their master, and requested permission to pluck out the intruders. It was agreed among them that good seed had been sown, and the dandelion or false wheat was by common consent and without hesitation set down as the work of an enemy. — *Arnold*.

28. An enemy hath done this. In the householder's reply the mischief is traced up to its origin: *An enemy hath done this*. It is attributed not to the imperfection, ignorance, weakness, which cling to every thing human, but to the distinct counter-working of the great spiritual enemy. — *Bible-Reader's Commentary*.

29. But he said, Nay. The householder of the parable is clearly intended to be a pattern of patient wisdom. He knows that he can defeat the malice of his foe, but he will choose his own time and plan. While both wheat and tares were green, men might mistake between the two; or, in the act of rooting up the one, tear up the other. When harvest came, and the stalks were dry, and the difference of aspect greater, it would be comparatively easy to gather the tares and leave the wheat. — *Ellicott*. Lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat. It makes much for the beauty of the parable and is full of instruction, that wheat and tares are not seeds of different kinds, but that the last is a degenerate wheat. They are only distinguishable when the ear is formed; thus fulfilling literally the Lord's words, "By their fruits ye shall know them." — *Trench*. Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to grow together until the time of harvest. — *Wm. M. Thomson*.

30. Let both grow together until the harvest. They would not spoil the true wheat; and in time of harvest it would be easy to separate them. Our Saviour teaches us here: 1st, That hypocrites and deceived persons must be expected in the church. 2d, That this is the work of the enemy of man. They are not the work of Christianity, any more than traitors are of patriotism, or counterfeiters are of the proper effect of legislating about money. They belong to the world; and hypocrisy is only one form of sin. The Christian religion never made a hypocrite; nor is there a hypocrite on the face of the earth whose principles and practice it does not condemn. 3d, That all hope of removing them entirely would be vain. 4th, That an attempt to remove them altogether would injure real Christianity, by causing excitements, discord, and hard feelings even among Christians. 5th, That he will himself separate them at the proper time. There is no doubt that it is the duty of the church to attempt to keep itself pure, and to cut off gross and manifest offenders. (1 Cor. 5: 4, 5.) He refers to those who may be suspected of hypocrisy, but against whom it cannot be proved; to those who so successfully imitate Christians as to make it difficult or impossible for man to distinguish them. — *Barnes*. In the present imperfect scene of things, the virtuous and the wicked are so intermingled, and so connected with each other, that it is frequently impossible to punish the guilty without involving the innocent in their sufferings. On this ground, the best and most substantial reasons may exist for delaying the punishment of the wicked, both with respect to individuals and nations; and thus, while we are rashly calling out for immediate vengeance, the Judge of all the earth is full of tenderness and pity, and sees the best reasons for respiting the most notorious offenders. — *Bishop Porteus*. God mercifully and wisely permits this mixture of

gether first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but¹ gather the wheat into my barn.

37. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man:

38. The field is the world: the

good seed² are the children of the kingdom; but the tares³ are the children of the wicked one.

39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest⁴ is the end⁵ of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

¹ Chap. 3: 12. ² Chap. 8: 12. ³ John 8: 44. Acts 13: 10. See ver. 19. ⁴ Joel 3: 13. Rev. 14: 15. ⁵ Vers. 40, 49. Chaps. 24: 3; 28: 20. Comp. Dan. 12: 13. Heb. 9: 26.

the good and the bad, for the trial of both, for the improvement of the one and for the amendment of the others. — *Dr. Fortin*. Gather together first the tares. Christ, as the Judge, will separate the two classes (as in chap. 25: 32). It will be observed that the tares are burned *before* the wheat is housed; in the exposition of the parable (vers. 41, 43) the same order is observed; and the same in chap. 25: 46 — as if in some literal sense, "with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (Ps. 91: 8). — *J. F. and B.* And burn them, to keep the tares from spreading.

37. He answered. In reply to the request of his disciples for the meaning of the parable. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; i.e., Jesus Christ. Observe that all sowing, whether done by prophet, apostle, preacher, teacher, or parent, is done by Christ in him. — *Abbott*. He claimed the title (which was already given him in the Old Testament, Dan. 8: 13), inasmuch as it was he who alone realized the idea of man, the second Adam, who, unlike the first, should maintain his position as the head and representative of the race, — the one perfect flower which had ever unfolded itself out of the root and stalk of humanity. — *Trench*. While he was the Son of man, and thus the perfect man, he was no less truly the Son of God. The one was witnessed in his tears, and sorrows, and sufferings, and death. The other was manifested by his miracles, his words, his attributes, his victories, his ascension. — *John Cumming, D.D.*

38. The field is the world. Not the church; the word *world* (*κόσμος*) never represents the church in the New Testament, but the whole world of humanity. The whole world of humanity is the kingdom of Christ, though only a part recognizes its duty of allegiance to him; much of it is a kingdom in rebellion. It is for the whole world Christ has died (John 3: 16. 1 John 2: 2), and that throughout the whole world the seed is to be sown (Matt. 28: 19, 20). In the Donastic controversy, famous in ecclesiastical history, the Catholic commentators read, The field is the church, an interpretation which they endeavor to sustain by ingenious arguments, and which is, singularly, sustained by the great body of commentators since. At all events, the direct and unambiguous words of Christ, The field is the world, are not to be departed from. — *Abbott*. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. The true membership, such as really belong to the kingdom, in distinction from those who are but nominally such. In the last parable, the good seed was the truth; but here, in the progress of the sentiment, the seed is regarded as having entered into the person, and having become identical with him. — *Jacobus*. God's children are seed, not mere grains of sand; for they are living, they are the means of increasing the disciples, through them the whole world is to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, and the children of the kingdom. — *P.* The tares . . . the children of the wicked one. Those partaking of his nature, and belonging to him, and destined to be sharers in his punishment. — *Alexander*. Here, as throughout the Scriptures, the broad line is drawn between the two classes of men: they do not in fact, as in appearance, resemble one another. One is produced from good seed, the other from evil seed; one class are the children of God, the other are the children of the Devil; one belong to the kingdom of light, the other to the kingdom of darkness. But the difference is not ineradicable here: the great gulf which begins on earth becomes impassable only at death. — *Abbott*. We are not to suppose that the wheat can never become tares, or the tares wheat: this would be to contradict the purpose of Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; and this gracious purpose shines through the command, Let both grow together till the harvest. — *Alford*.

39. The enemy . . . is the devil. Here, as elsewhere, the personality of the Devil is recognized by our Lord in unmistakable terms. This is no parable, but the interpretation of a parable: it is no concession to popular prejudice, for it is uttered to his own disciples alone. Evil and false teaching is attributed directly to his influence; of him are wicked and evil-producing men, who are the children of the wicked one, as good men are

40. As therefore the tares are gathered¹ and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41. The Son of man² shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,³ and them which do iniquity;

42. And shall cast⁴ them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43. Then shall the righteous⁵ shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who⁶ hath ears to hear, let him hear.

¹ John 15: 6. ² Chap. 24: 31. ³ Chap. 16: 23; 18: 7. ⁴ Ver. 50. See chap. 8: 12. ⁵ Prov. 4: 18. Dan. 12: 3. ⁶ Ver. 9.

the children of the kingdom of God and seed sown by God. — *Abbott*. The instant that Christ opens his ministry for the setting-up of the kingdom of God, at the same instant Satan starts forward as the hinderer and adversary of it, the tempter of Him who is the head and prince of this kingdom. And instead of hearing less of Satan, as the mystery of the kingdom of God proceeds to unfold itself, in the last book of Scripture, that which details the fortune of the Church till the end of time, we hear more of him, and he is brought in more evidently and openly working, than in any other. It is very observable, too, that Satan is spoken of as *his* enemy, the enemy of the Son of man; for here, as in so many other places, the great conflict is spoken of as rather between Satan and the Son of man, than between Satan and God. It was part of the great scheme of redemption, that the victory over evil should be a moral triumph, not a triumph obtained by a mere putting-forth of superior strength. We can see how important for this end it was, that man, who lost the battle, should also win it (1 Cor. 15: 21), and therefore, as by and through man the kingdom of darkness was to be overthrown, so the enmity of the Serpent was specially directed against the seed of the woman, the Son of man. — *Trench*. The harvest is the end of the world. Or time. It is an entirely different word from that translated "world" in ver. 38, "The field is the world." It is the end of the present dispensation; strictly speaking, the *end of the age*; i.e., of the period that precedes the "coming" of the Son of man as Judge, which is to usher in the "world," or the "age" to come. The reapers are the angels. The angels are often spoken of as accompanying the Lord when he comes at the day of judgment. See Matt. 16: 27; 24: 31. Rev. 19: 14. 2 Thess. 1: 7. —

41. The Son of man. Christ himself is Lord of angels, and ruler in this kingdom. Out of his kingdom. The angels sent forth by Christ will accomplish what men could not do, ought not to attempt to do, namely, remove all evil from the Church and from the world, which will stand only so long as the purpose of the kingdom requires it. — *Schaff*. Here the whole world of good and evil is represented as *his* kingdom, from which the evil is to be gathered out. — *Abbott*. All things that offend. Or, cause to stumble. All those who have proved a stumbling-block to others. And them which do iniquity. The former class, as the worst, are mentioned first. It is worse to lead others to do wrong, than only to do wrong ourselves.

42. Cast them into a furnace of fire. Fire was employed as a punishment by the Chaldeans. Herod the Great burned to death certain who had opposed his authority in his last days (*Wars of Jews*, i., 33, § 4). Weeds also were used among the Jews as a fuel, especially for heating their ovens; a fire was kindled inside, and subsequently removed to make room for the bread (Matt. 6: 30). From this double use comes the employment of fire in the Bible as a metaphor of the punishment of the ungodly. Here and elsewhere it is adopted by Christ for the same purpose, and assuredly with a full sense of the terrible significance which the Jewish mind would attach to the metaphor. — *Abbott*. As the tares were burned, this may be figurative; but it undoubtedly refers to intolerable suffering, resulting not simply from the circumstances of the evil-doers in a future state, but from their character. — *Schaff*. As the tares were burned by the farmers to keep them from spreading, so are the wicked, in order to keep wickedness from increasing, and destroying all the good. — *P*. Wailing and gnashing of teeth. Expressions of rage and impatience (Acts 7: 54), under the sense of intolerable pain and unutterable loss. — *Trench*.

43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun. Fire was the element of the dark and cruel kingdom of hell, so is light of the pure heavenly kingdom. Then, when the dark hindering element is removed, shall this element of light, which was before struggling with and obstructed by it, come forth in its full brightness. (See Col. 3: 3. Rom. 8: 18. Prov. 25: 4, 5.) A glory shall be revealed *in* the saints: it shall not merely be brought *to* them, and added from without; but rather a glory which they before had, but which did not before evidently appear, shall burst forth and show itself openly, as did the

Lord's hidden glory once in the days of his flesh, at the moment of his transfiguration. That shall be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: they shall shine forth as the sun, when the clouds are rolled away (Dan. 12: 3). — *Trench*. The sun shines with three kinds of rays: (1) Rays of light, which are also rays of color, filling the world with beauty. (2) Rays of heat, warming and cheering the world, which are also rays of power, nearly all known power coming from the sun. (3) Chemical rays, or rays of life, moving the life-forces in plants. Christians shine with all these rays. — *P*. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. This is the common formula (chap. 11: 15) for calling attention to something that needs special notice to be understood. It intimates, too, that all would not understand. And it is an appeal, in general terms, to all who have the natural faculties, as they are bound to hear. It summons the Christian attention of those who understand the gospel by grace. So that this parable is addressed to every one as much as to those disciples. — *Jacobus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

For an account of tares, see Van Lennep's "Bible Lands," pp. 84, 85; and Thomson's "Land and Book," vol. ii. pp. 111-114. On the whole parable, see *Trench* on the Parables, Arnot, Guthrie, &c.; W. H. Mill's "University Sermons;" "The National Preacher," Nos. 10 and 31; "The Field is the World," F. Wayland in "Pulpit Eloquence;" "The Irreparable Past," Series 2, F. W. Robertson; "The Final Harvest," Dr. Emmons, vol. vi. On ver. 43, sermons by Summerfield, and H. E. Manning.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. An enemy hath done this. — Vers. 5, 28. Strange as it may appear, this is still literally done in the East. See that lurking villain watching for the time when his neighbor shall *plough* his field; he carefully marks the period when the work has been finished, and goes the night following, and casts in what the natives call *pandinellu*, that is, pig paddy: this, being of rapid growth, springs up before the good seed, and scatters itself before the other can be reaped, so that the poor owner of the field will be for years before he can get rid of the troublesome weed. But there is another noisome plant which these wretches cast into the ground of those they hate, called *perum-pirandi*, which is more destructive to vegetation than any other plant. Has a man purchased a field out of the hands of another? the offended says, "I will plant the *perum-pirandi* in his grounds." — *Robert's Orient. Ill.*

III. God's patience with sinners. — Ver. 30. When Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate, and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to him, and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship thee." God answered, "I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonored me; and couldst thou not endure him for one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham. — *Dean Stanley*.

III. He that hath ears, &c. — Ver. 43. It is written in one of the Eastern legends, that somewhere in the deserts of Arabia there stood a mass of jagged rock, the surface of which was seamed and scarred by the elements; but whenever any one came to the rock in the right way he saw a door shape itself in the sides of the barren stone, through which he could enter in, and find a store of rich and precious treasures, which he could carry away with him. There are some things in God's universe that seem as barren and unattractive as bare and fissured rocks, but which contain an inwardness of warmth and sweetness inconceivable. The inner holies of God are fast concealed from those who will not come aright, with a heart of love and trust, but open to all who are willing to see and to hear. — *Scrap-Book*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 25. Satan is always sowing tares among the good seed, in revivals, in churches, in sabbath schools, in temperance, everywhere.

2. The evil are ever trying to spread their evil, and make others as bad and unhappy as they are.
3. The fact that there are tares among the wheat does not prove the non-existence of wheat.
4. At first many a bad doctrine and bad man have the appearance of being good.
5. The fruit they bear will test their character.
6. Ver. 29. It is wrong to use force for the purifying of the Church : it always does more harm than good.
7. Ver. 30. The bad remain among the good, that they may be persuaded to become good, and the good may be made better by laboring to change the bad into good.
8. God gives every possible opportunity for men to repent. God is wonderfully patient with sinners.
9. The wicked are punished, as tares are burned, in order to prevent wickedness from spreading.
10. Ver. 48. The world is Christ's kingdom : sinners are therefore rebels against rightful authority.
11. Ver. 40. There is no describing the pain to which sin brings men at last.
12. So the power and blessedness of the righteous at last is inconceivably glorious, a light, a cheer, a joy to all.
13. Every one receives of God's truth according to what he is, and what he hath.

LESSON IV. — APRIL 25, 1880.

CONFESSION AND CROSS-BEARING. — MATT. 16 : 13-28.

TIME. — Summer, A.D. 29. Near the close of the third circuit of Galilee, several months after our last lesson.

PLACE. — Region of Cæsarea Philippi, north of Galilee, at the head-waters of the Jordan, about four miles east of Dan, the northernmost town of the Holy Land proper. — *Abbott.*

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (fourth year) ; Herod Antipas, of Galilee (33d year) ; Herod Philip, other parts (33d year)..

INTRODUCTION.

The ministry in Galilee is now drawing to its close. Through the length and breadth of that country Jesus has proclaimed the kingdom of Christ, and has shown by mighty works that he is the Christ that was to come. He begins to ask the disciples, what are the results of all his labor. First inquiring who the people said that he was, he then put the same question to the apostles themselves. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary.*

13. When¹ Jesus came into the coasts | ples, saying, Whom do men say that I,
of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disci- | the Son of man, am ?

¹ Mark 8 : 27-29. Luke 9 : 18-20.

EXPLANATORY.

13. **When Jesus came.** There is an obvious withdrawal from the populous cities which had been the scene of his earlier labors, and which had practically rejected him, and cast in their lot with his enemies. This last journey took them to a district which he had apparently never before visited, and to which he now came, it would seem, not as a preacher of the kingdom, but simply for retirement, and perhaps for safety. — *Ellicott.* **Coasts. Borders. Cæsarea Philippi.** A town at the source of the Jordan. It was earlier known by the name of Panium, from the worship of the heathen god Pan. Herod the Great beautified it, and built a temple to Augustus. Later it was enlarged and beautified by Philip the tetrarch, who gave to it the name of Cæsarea, in honor of his emperor (Tiberius Cæsar), adding Philippi (his own name) to distinguish it from Cæsarea on the Mediterranean. — *Rev. George H. Whitney.* **Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am ?** The Greek emphasizes "men" by prefixing the article, so as to contrast the opinions of men, as such,

14. And they said, Some say that thou art John¹ the Baptist; some, Elias;² and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ,³ the Son⁴ of the living God.⁵

17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed⁶ art thou, Simon⁷ Bar-jona: for flesh⁸ and blood hath

human means

¹ Chap. 14: 2. Mark 6: 14. Luke 9: 7. ² Mark 6: 15. Luke 9: 8. Comp. 17: 10. John 1: 21. ³ Ver. 30. John 11: 27. ⁴ Comp. 14: 33. ⁵ Ps. 42: 2. Chap. 26: 63. Acts 14: 15. 1 Thess. 1: 9. Heb. 9: 14. ⁶ Comp. chap. 13: 16. ⁷ John 1: 42; 21: 15-17. ⁸ 1 Cor. 15: 50. Gal. 3: 16. Eph. 6: 12.

with God's revelation. It was a time of at least seeming failure and partial desertion, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6: 66). He had turned to the twelve, and asked, in tones of touching sadness, "Will ye also go away?" He had had to rebuke them as being "of little faith" (verse 8). One of the twelve was cherishing in his soul the "devil-temper" of a betrayer (John 6: 70). It was time, if we may so speak, that they should be put to a crucial test, and the alternative of faith, or want of faith, pressed home upon their consciences. — *Ellicott*. He had never openly spoken of his Messiahship. John, indeed, had borne witness to him, and to those who could receive it he had indirectly intimated that he was the Son of God. But it was his will that the revelation should dawn gradually on the minds of his children; that it should spring more from the truths he spoke, and the life he lived, than from the wonders which he wrought. It was in the Son of man that they were to recognize the Son of God. — *Farrar*. The Son of man is a pregnant expression, which we now know to imply the Messiahship in the root of our human nature, which even then was taken by the Jews as the Son of God (see Luke 22: 69, 70), and which would serve as a test of the faith of the disciples, according to their understanding of it. — *Alford*.

14. Some say thou art John the Baptist, raised again from the dead. See chap. 14: 2. This for a time had been the opinion of the courtiers of Herod. Some Elias. Greek for Elijah. As the precursor of the Messiah. Others Jeremias. Greek for Jeremiah. In the same sense as Elijah. The opinion of these persons concerning Jesus was evidently lower than that of those who regarded him as Elijah. (Mark 15: 35. John 1: 21.) Or one of the prophets. According to the lowest view, he was represented by discouraged friends as one of the old prophets. — *Lange*.

15. Whom say ye? The pronoun is doubly emphasized in the Greek, "But ye—whom say ye?" . . . — *Ellicott*.

16. And Simon Peter answered. His original name was Simon or Simeon. The appellation Peter was given him by our Lord, when he first and but temporarily joined Jesus at the ford of Bethabara (John 1: 40, 41). He expresses not an opinion, but an assured and certain fact. — *Abbott*. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. He does not say, "Scribes and Pharisees, rulers and people, are all perplexed; and shall we, unlettered fishermen, presume to decide?" but, feeling the light of his Master's glory shining in his soul, he breaks forth, not in a tame, prosaic acknowledgment, "I believe that thou art," &c., but in the language of adoration, "THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!" He first owns him the promised Messiah (see chap. 1: 16); then he rises higher, echoing the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son;" and in the important addition, "Son of the LIVING GOD," he recognizes the essential and eternal life of God as in this his Son. — *J. F. and B.* This acknowledgment itself might have been made by Peter at an earlier period; but the way in which he made it at that critical moment, and the feeling which inspired it, showed that he had obtained a new intuition of Christ as the Son of God. It was for this that Christ called him "blessed," because the drawing of the Father had led him to the Son, and the Father had revealed himself to him in the Son. — *Neander*.

17. Blessed art thou, is a solemn expression of blessing, an inclusion of him to whom it is addressed in the kingdom of heaven, not a mere word of praise. — *Alford*. Simon Bar-jona; i.e., Simon, son of Jona. Flesh and blood; i.e., human means. It was not natural, or of human agency, that this truth of the divine Messiahship of Christ had been disclosed to him. — *Jacobus*. But my Father which is in heaven. Peter and those for whom he speaks had derived this knowledge from no human source, either in themselves or others, but from a divine revelation, and probably in answer to the special prayer of Jesus. Ver. 16; comp. Luke 9: 18, &c. — *Binney*. Revealed it. True spiritual blessedness consists not in a merely intellectual belief, but in the spiritual apprehension of Christ's

ever the church - into the church -

APRIL 25.

LESSON IV.

MATT. 16: 13-28.

not revealed¹ *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. will build my church; and the gates^d of hell shall not prevail against it.

18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock³ I keys⁴ of the kingdom of heaven: and

or Cephas 1 Cor. 2: 10. 2 Eph. 2: 20. 3 Isa. 38: 10. 4 Isa. 22: 22. Rev. 1: 18; 3: 7.

divine character. Comp. Matt. 11: 27. 1 Cor. 2: 5. Gal. 1: 15, 16. — *Abbott*. It was no longer a mere knowledge (or recognition) of Christ. While the general knowledge of the Jews concerning the Messiah had retrograded and degenerated into discordant and self-contradictory *opinions*, the knowledge of the disciples had advanced, and was now summed up and concentrated into an act of spiritual faith in Peter's confession. On all the main points the Jewish and traditional notions of the Messiah had evidently been thrown off, and a pure and spiritual faith attained from converse with the life of Jesus. In both these respects it was a revelation of the Father in heaven; i.e., a heavenly and spiritual production. — *Lange*.

18. Thou art Peter. The name *Peter*, or *Cephas*, signifying a rock, was bestowed by our Lord on his first interview with Simon (John 1: 42). Upon this rock I will build my church. This rock . . . my church. This passage is variously interpreted. All admit that by "my church" is meant Christ's church at large, the whole body of Christian believers. But the words "this rock" are very differently applied: 1. To *Peter* personally, with allusion to his significant name, "a stone," implying that in being the first to confess Christ he would be, as it were, the foundation stone of the Church, and primate in the apostleship: this is the popish or Roman Catholic view. 2. By "this rock" is meant Peter; yet not him exclusively, but as the representative of the apostles collectively, who, in their office and teaching, are the appointed founders of the Christian Church (Eph. 2: 20. Rev. 21: 14). 3. By "this rock" is meant Christ himself as the elect chief corner-stone and only sure foundation of the Church (Isa. 28: 16. Note 1 Pet. 2: 4-8. 1 Cor. 3: 11. Eph. 2: 20). 4. By "this rock" is meant the confession of Peter as being that of all the apostles, and, indeed, of all true believers, in so far as this confession identifies them with Christ (chap. 10: 32. Rom. 10: 9, 10. 1 John 5: 1, 20). — *Binney*. That which makes Simon to be in truth a Peter (a rock) is his vital faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Every one who possesses a like faith is, according to the measure of his faith, a Peter; that is, a rock; and Christ builds his Church on this rock, that is, on this living experience of faith in the Christ, the Son of the living God, inspired in the hearts of men by the Spirit of God. Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, and others, make either Christ, or Peter's confession of a faith in Christ, the rock, not Peter himself; and the last is substantially sustained by Calvin and by the best modern scholars. Among them may be mentioned Lange, Schaff, Olshausen, De Wette, Meyer, Stier, and Brown. If this interpretation be correct, the passage teaches (1) that the only condition of membership in the visible Church which Jesus Christ recognized is vital faith in himself, wrought by the indwelling Spirit of God. (2) The condition of true power in the Church is always vital faith in Jesus Christ in the hearts of its members. — *Abbott*. The gates of hell, or Hades (under-world). See ver. 22, Lesson VI., 1st quarter. This expression is equivalent here to "the kingdom of Satan." — *De Wette*. The phrase "gates of Hades" may be regarded as here equivalent to the forces of the kingdom of death sallying out from its gates, as from a fortified city, to attack the kingdom of Christ represented in its great congregation; or we may conceive the metaphor to be drawn from the attempt of an enemy to hold captives in a walled city, but without effect, the gates being unable to keep them in their captivity. — *Abbott*. Shall not prevail against it. Nothing in our Lord's teaching is, as measured by man's judgment, more wonderful than the utterance of such a prophecy at such a time. It was, as has been said, a time of seeming failure. He was about to announce, with a clearness unknown before, his coming death as a malefactor; and yet it was at this moment that he proclaimed the perpetuity and triumph of the society which as yet, it may be said, existed only in the germs of a half-realized conception. — *Ellicott*.

19. This, with the preceding verse, has given rise to much bitter controversy. — The claim of supreme authority in the Church made for Peter by the Church of Rome, and then arrogated to themselves by the popes as the legitimate successors of St. Peter, is baseless and impudent. — *F. F. and B.* I will give unto thee. Another personal promise to Peter, remarkably fulfilled in his being the first to admit both Jews and Gentiles into the Church. — *Alford*. You have but to read Matt. 18: 18, 19, and John 20: 19-23, to be fully satisfied, that, put what interpretation you may upon the words spoken at Caesarea

and permit
whatsoever¹ thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20. Then² charged he his disciples,

that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21. From that time forth began³ Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go⁴ unto Jerusalem, and

¹ Comp. chap. 18: 18. John 20: 23. ² Mark 8: 30. Luke 9: 21. ³ Mark 8: 31; 9: 1. Luke 9: 22-27. ⁴ Chap. 20: 18.

Philippi to Peter, they conveyed to him no power or privilege beyond that which Jesus conferred upon the entire college of the apostles, and, in its collective capacity, upon the Church. — *Hanna*. The keys. The key in the East was a symbol of authority; was made long, with a crook at one end, so that it could be worn around the neck as a badge of office. To this use of the key reference is had in Isa. 9: 6, and in the promise to Eliakim, Isa. 22: 22. — *Abbott*. There was another thought, which, in the latter clause of the verse, becomes the dominant one. The scribes of Israel were thought of as stewards of the treasures of divine wisdom (13: 52). When they were admitted to their office they received, as its symbol, the "key of knowledge" (Luke 11: 52), which was to admit them to the treasure-chambers of the house of the interpreter, the *Beth-Midrash of the Rabbis*. For this work the Christ had been training his disciples, and now the "key" was given to him as the token of his admission to that office. It made him not a priest, but a teacher and interpreter. — *Ellicott*. Of the kingdom of heaven. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" in the Gospels never means the visible, external, organic Church, and rarely, if ever, the future state in contrast with the present, but the reign of God in the individual soul, or in the community. The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" do not, then, symbolize power to admit or exclude from the earthly Church, or from heaven, but *power in the life of allegiance to God*; i.e., in the Christian life. — *Abbott*. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, &c. The phrase "to bind" and "to loose" was often used by the Jews. It meant, to *prohibit* and to *permit*. To bind a thing was to forbid it; to loose it, to allow it to be done. Thus they said about gathering wood on the sabbath day, "The school of Shammei binds it," i.e., forbids it; "the school of Hillel looses it," i.e., allows it. This does not refer to persons, but to things, — "whatsoever," not *whosoever*. It refers to rites and ceremonies in the Church. Such of the Jewish customs as they should forbid were to be forbidden, and such as they thought proper to permit were to be allowed. Such rites as they should appoint in the Church were to have the force of divine authority. Accordingly they forbid circumcision, and the eating of things offered to idols, and strangled, and blood (Acts 15: 20). They founded the Church, and ordained its rites, as of divine authority. — *Barnes*. Bound in heaven . . . loosed in heaven. Jesus meant that whatsoever they forbid should have divine authority: whatever they permitted or commanded should also have divine authority; that is, should be bound or loosed in heaven, or meet the approbation of God. They were to be guided infallibly in the organization of the Church (1) by the teaching of Christ, and (2) by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. — *Barnes*. Fairly interpreted, the promise of the keys gives not license to the individual to be without law, but it gives him liberty and power in his Christian life to follow the guidance of the Spirit of God; not sure that he will make no mistakes, but sure that there is no condemnation for them that "walk after the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 1). I understand, then, the promise of the keys to be made to Peter as the possessor of a living faith in Jesus as the divine Messiah, and through him to all who, by a like faith, are endowed with a like strength of character, not natural, but God-given; and I would paraphrase it thus: "To my disciples I will give authority in their spiritual life, so that they shall no longer be bound by rules and regulations like those of the Pharisees or of the Mosaic code; but whatsoever, under the inspiration of a living faith in me, they shall prohibit themselves, God will prohibit; and whatsoever, under that inspiration, they shall permit themselves, God will permit: for they shall have the mind of the Spirit." If I have read this passage aright, it is the spiritual Magna Charta of the disciples of Christ. — *Abbott*.

20. Tell no man. Because the apostles were not as yet fully schooled in the doctrine of the true nature of Christ's kingdom and office, and would not be so till the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them; also because Christ desired not to exasperate his enemies, but allow them longer time to consider the evidence of his works. — *Wordsworth*. That he was the Christ. The Messiahship of Jesus was perfected by his death and resurrection; and on the fact of the resurrection the apostles, Peter pre-eminently, based their subsequent public proclamation that Jesus was the Christ. — *Abbott*.

21. From that time . . . began Jesus to show unto his disciples. This was the

...variance with the Divine will -

suffer¹ many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and he killed, and be raised again the third² day.

22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. *Can this be?*

23. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; *thou art an offence³ unto me; for thou savorest⁴ not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me,

¹ Chap. 17: 12, 22, 23. ² Chap. 20: 19; 27: 63. ³ Chap. 13: 41. ⁴ Rom. 8: 5. Phil. 3: 19.

first intimation that he gave that he was to die in this cruel manner. Their minds were not prepared for it. They expected a temporal, triumphant prince, as the Messiah. He first, therefore, convinced them that *he* was the Christ; and then, with great prudence, began to correct their apprehensions of the proper character of the Messiah. — *Barnes*. He must go. The necessity of his sufferings was revealed; not in all its bearings, since after his resurrection he must still ask, "Ought not Christ to have suffered," &c. (Luke 24: 26). **Suffer many things.** His sufferings included more than the outward persecutions. — *Schaff*. Elders, chief priests, and scribes. The *elders* were leaders in the Jewish nation. Their age gave them their authority as counsellors and leaders; hence their name. From them were selected certain representatives of the lay element in the Sanhedrim, the supreme court of the Jewish nation in the time of Christ. The *chief priests* were the heads of the priestly courses; the *scribes* were the Jewish rabbis, the writers and teachers of the law. Christ's language here represents the Sanhedrim, which was composed of these three classes, laymen, priests, and teachers. — *Abbott*. **And be killed.** A startling announcement to the disciples, and yet Daniel (9: 26) and Isaiah (53: 4-10) had foretold it. "The cross" is the necessary climax of his sufferings. — *Schaff*. **Raised again the third day.** He showed them that he was to still be a living, not a dead Saviour; one present, not past.

22. Then Peter took him . . . began to rebuke him. Either laid hold on him to interrupt him, or took him aside. The explanation, "took by the hand," for friendly entreaty, is unwarranted. **And began to rebuke him.** He did not proceed far in this chiding. **Be it far from thee, Lord.** Literally, "propitious to thee," equivalent either to, God be favorable to thee, or Spare thyself. **This shall never be to thee.** An overconfident declaration, betraying pride as well as opposition to the purpose of God ("must go," ver. 21) revealed by our Lord. Peter was bold as confessor and as opposer; was impulsive, perhaps vain and ambitious. — *Schaff*.

23. He turned and said unto Peter. St. Mark adds significantly, "when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples." They, we may believe, stood behind, watching the effect of the remonstrance which Peter had uttered as their spokesman. **Get thee behind me, Satan.** The sharpness of the words indicates a strong and intense emotion. The chief of the apostles was addressed in the self-same terms as those which had been spoken to the Tempter, Matt. 4: 10. It was, indeed, nothing less than a renewal of the same temptation. In this suggestion, that he might gain the crown without the cross, and attain a kingdom of this world, the Christ saw the recurrence of the temptation which had offered him the glory of those kingdoms on condition of his drawing back from the path which the Father had appointed for him. — *Ellicott*. The same Peter who but just now had made so noble and spiritual a confession, and received so high a blessing, now shows the weak and carnal side of his character. The expression of spiritual faith may, and frequently does, precede the betraying of carnal weakness; and never is this more probable than when the mind has just been uplifted, as Peter's was, by commendation and lofty promise. — *Alford*. **Thou art an offence unto me.** Literally, a stumbling-block, or stone. **Thou savorest (or thou mindest) not the things of God; i.e., as represented by Christ, not regarding God's purpose in the foretold death. The things of men; i.e., he had carnal views, expected the temporal exaltation of the Messiah.** Human nature is here represented as opposed to God, and under the influence of Satan. A rebuke for all who have a sentimental admiration for Jesus of Nazareth, but stumble at the cross, which belongs to "the things of God." — *The Popular Commentary*.

24. **Unto his disciples.** To others also whom he called about him (Mark 8: 34. Luke 9: 23, "to all"). **If any man will come after me.** A general statement, involving on this occasion the question, Will you follow me, even to the death which I have assured you must come? Unlike worldly leaders, Christ declares the darker side of his

let him deny himself, and take up his cross,¹ and follow² me.

25. For whosoever³ will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what⁴ shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27. For the Son of man⁵ shall come

¹ Chap. 10: 38. ² John 8: 12; 12: 26. ³ Chap. 10: 39. ⁴ Comp. Ps. 49: 7, 8. ⁵ Dan. 7: 13. Chap. 19: 28; 24: 30; 26: 64.

service; he asks for willing followers. A religion of *force* cannot be Christ's religion. — *Schaff*. Let him deny himself. Our common thoughts of "self-denial," i.e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. — *Ellicott*. Take up his cross. (Luke says, "daily.") Cheerfully bear all the burdens of Christ's service, even unto death. — *P*. The cross, for the cross, never; but the cross for the Lord, always; for no man can accept the crucified One without the cross, except he take the shadow for the substance. Christianity without the cross is Christianity without Christ. — *Adolphe Monod, D.D.* Follow me, was the call to each of them. To forsake all, and follow him, was the substance of duty, to take him instead of all things else. — *Jacobus*.

25. Whosoever is determined to save his life shall lose it; but whosoever is willing to lose his life for my sake shall find it. In the original Greek there is a difference between the first and second clause of this verse which the English version does not preserve, but which the above translation may indicate to the English reader. All self-seeking is self-losing. Even in spiritual things, he who is perpetually studying how to secure joy and peace for himself loses it. A certain measure of self-forgetfulness is the condition of the highest success, even in Christian grace. — *Abbott*. Life is more than existence: it implies all that blessedness which makes life worth living. Christ says that no man will ever really gain anything in the end by disobeying him in order to gain this world, or escape the losing it.

26. What is a man profited . . . gain the whole world . . . lose his own soul? (or life.) The terms are chosen from the dialect of ordinary secular business. What will a man gain, on ordinary principles of value or exchange, if he gain the whole world, — i.e., all it can offer as an object of attraction or desire, the sum total of enjoyment, whether sensual, intellectual, or pecuniary, — and lose (be made to lose, be injured, ruined, with respect to) his own soul, or the word before translated "life," but here denoting rather that which lives, enjoys, suffers? What are enjoyments if there is no one to enjoy them, if the man himself is lost, i.e., lost to happiness forever? — *Alexander*. A question which comes the most home to every man's concern of any that can possibly enter into his thoughts. Nothing which the world offers can make up for the loss of the soul, or be a compensation when that is at stake. — *Paley*. What . . . give in exchange? Christ pursues the awful supposition farther to the verge of paradox and contradiction, but with terrible advantage to the force of this transcendent argument. Suppose a man to lose his soul, his life, himself, how shall he recover it, redeem it, buy it back again, by giving an equivalent in value? There is something unspeakably impressive in this method of suggesting the importance of eternal interests, by supposing the very life or soul itself to be lost to the possessor, and an effort made to buy it back, and then propounding the question, where is the equivalent, or how shall it be rendered? A man may lose his present life, and yet live on and have a better life; but, when he loses his eternal life, he is himself lost, lost forever; and the thought of compensation or recovery involves a contradiction. — *Alexander*.

27. This verse undoubtedly refers to the day of judgment. For the Son of man shall come. The fact stands in a logical relation to the preceding verse. The fact that the Son of man is about to come to execute judgment, clothes its abstract statement with an awful certainty. From first to last, in our Lord's teaching, this claim to be the future Judge of all men is never absent. It is asserted in every great discourse, implied in almost every parable. — *Ellicott*. The glory of his Father. The shechinah, or bright cloud, symbolizing the divine presence (Exod. 16: 7, 10. Num. 11: 25. Luke 2: 9), and his own glory (Luke 9: 26), that is, in the full manifested glory of the Godhead. — *Binney*. Reward. Repentance, or do justice to. He will deal with them according to their character. — *Barnes*. According to his works (or doing). His whole character and conduct. This depends upon the effort either to save the lower life, or gain the higher. This doing results from faith or unbelief. — *Schaff*.

in the glory of his Father with his angels;¹ and then he shall reward² every man according to his works.

28. Verily I say unto you, There be

some standing here, which shall not taste of death,³ till they see⁴ the Son of man coming⁵ in his kingdom.

¹ Dan. 7: 10. Zech. 14: 5. Chap. 25: 31. ² 1 Thess. 4: 16. ³ 2 Thess. 1: 7. ⁴ 2 Cor. 5: 10. Rev. 22: 12.
⁵ John 8: 52. Heb. 2: 9. ⁶ Comp. chaps. 10: 23; 23: 36; 24: 34. ⁷ Luke 23: 42.

28. The transition between this and the preceding verse is more noticeable in both Mark and Luke than here. There is a contrast between the coming referred to in ver. 27, in the glory of the Father, and the coming in his own kingdom, referred to in ver. 28. That the reference in this latter verse is not to the judgment, is evident. — *Abbott*. There be some of them that stand here. The twelve and the people about (Mark 8: 34). Who shall in no wise taste of death. Death is represented under the figure of a bitter cup. Some of those present should be still alive when the event referred to in the next clause should take place, though they should afterwards die. — *Schaff*. Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. This verse is one of the most difficult and disputed in the whole book; rather of application than meaning, however. The essential meaning is, that, before all then present should be dead, there would be some convincing proof that the Messiah's kingdom had been actually set up, as predicted by the prophets and by Christ himself. It has reference to a gradual or progressive change, the institution of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men, and in society at large, of which protracted process the two salient points are the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem more than a century later; between which points, as those of its inception and consummation, lies the lingering death of the Mosaic dispensation, and the gradual erection of Messiah's kingdom. — *Alexander*. We give below the opinions of other commentators, but of them all we prefer that of Alexander just given. (This was the last chapter on which Dr. Alexander commented in full, just before his death.) Chrysostom and many others refer the "coming of the Son of man" to the transfiguration immediately following. Grotius, Capellus, Welstein, Ebrard, Alford, and Owen apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the founding of the Church; Barnes and Abbott, to the day of Pentecost.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The little cross. — Theresa had a little ebony cross, the ends of which were tipped with gold. At one time the cross-piece became loose, and she begged her father to repair the cross. "That I will do very willingly," said her father; "and by means of it will try to teach you a lesson how you may live in this world, and no affliction or duty prove a cross to you. See, without this cross-piece the longer piece is not a cross; only when the cross-piece is added is a cross formed. So it is in every trial which we call a cross. The longer piece represents God's will; our will, when it desires to cross God's will, is represented by the cross-piece. Each cross you are called upon to bear, take from it the cross-piece, — your will, — and it will no longer prove a cross to you." — *Independent*.

II. You wonder at the folly of that rude and naked savage who would barter a coronet of gold for small worthless trinkets, and buy the wonders of a mirror, the tinkling of a bell, or a string of colored beads, with a handful of pearls, fit ornaments for a crown. Yet what is that compared with the folly of him who in exchange for the toys of earth gives — his soul? — *Dr. Guthrie*.

III. The fatal flower. — "Travellers who visit the Falls of Niagara are directed to a spot, in the margin of the precipice over the boiling current below, where a gay young lady a few years since sold her life for a flower. Ambitious and daring, she reached over the cliff for the lovely blossom, beyond the reach of others; the turf gave way, and she fell

into the waters, and was lost." So for some bright blossom of pleasure, or honor, or riches, men lose their souls.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 18. Christ the Son of God is the foundation of the Church.
2. The real Church is safe against all the powers of evil.
3. Ver. 19. Every Christian has, in his degree, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. By doing his duty in praying, giving, working, souls will be brought in. By neglect, they will be left out.
4. Vers. 21-23. Times of spiritual elevation and privilege are times also of special danger from pride and presumption.
5. We are ever tempted to substitute worldly wisdom, in religious affairs, for the divine wisdom and methods; but it proceeds from Satan.
6. Ver. 24. The first lesson in Christ's school is self-denial. — *Henry*.
7. Every one has a cross to bear, and that which Christ gives to each is the best one for him.
8. But, like Christ's cross, ours may become a glory, and lead to a crown.
9. Christ, when inviting us to join his kingdom, declares the plain, hard truth (as a sieve and a test).
10. Ver. 25. Self-seeking is the ruin of happiness and religion.
11. No man ever gained by doing wrong in order to be happy.
12. It is possible to lose the soul.
13. It is wonderful for how small a price men sell their souls.

LESSON V. — MAY 2, 1880.

THE TRANSFIGURATION. — MATT. 17: 1-13.

TIME. — Summer of A.D. 29. Six days after the events of the last lesson. Night.

PLACE. — Some mountain near Cæsarea Philippi; perhaps Hermon, but very uncertain.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, Galilee; Herod Philip, of other parts.

INTRODUCTION.

After our Lord's prediction of his sufferings and hint of his glory (chap. 16: 21-28), three chosen disciples receive a supernatural testimony and pledge of that glory. But the primary purpose probably was to give to our Lord, at this crisis, consolation from his Father, who by an attesting voice ushered in the sufferings as he had done the successes. — *Schaff*.

1. And¹ after six days Jesus taketh | and bringeth them up into a high
Peter,² James, and John his brother, | mountain apart.

¹ Mark 9: 2-8. Luke 9: 28-36. ² Chap. 26: 37. Mark 5: 37.

EXPLANATORY.

1. And after six days. The account of this event is given also by Mark (9: 2-8) and Luke (9: 28-36). It is referred to distinctly and directly by Peter (2 Pet. 1: 16-18), and perhaps by John (John 1: 14). All the evangelists give this note of time. Luke says, *about an eight days*: possibly he includes both the last day of the preceding conversation, and the day of the transfiguration; or his language *about* may be taken to indicate that he is not, and does not claim to be, definite. — *Abbott*. **Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John.** These three had been selected before as witnesses of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and afterwards were chosen to accompany their Master in his agony in Gethsemane. — *Cook*. The flower and crown of the apostolic band, Peter who loved him so much, John whom he loved so much, and James who should first attest that death could as little as life separate from his love. — *Trench*. **Into a high mountain.** The situation of this mountain is uncertain. It was probably not Tabor, according to the legend; for on the top of

2. And was transfigured before | sun, and his raiment was white as the
them: and his face did shine as the | light.

Tabor then most likely stood a fortified town. (*De Wette*, from *Robinson*.) Nor is there any likelihood that it was Panium, near Cæsarea Philippi; for the six days would probably be spent in journeying, and they appear immediately after to have come to Capernaum. It was most likely one of the mountains bordering the lake. St. Luke speaks of it merely as "the mountain" (country). *Stanley* ("*Sinai and Palestine*," p. 399) contends for Hermon; as does, though doubtingly, Dr. Thomson, "The Land and the Book" (vol. i. 348). *Stanley* thinks that our Lord would still be in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi; and that it is impossible to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which preserves the name in Palestine, and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. . . . High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken "apart by themselves."—*Alford*. Opinion seems to be strongly in favor of Hermon.—*P*. From Hermon he could see to the south all the dwellings of the people that had sat in darkness, and seen a great light, the land of Zabulon and of Naphtali, Galilee of the Gentiles, the gleam of the lake by Capernaum and Chorazin, and many a place loved by him and vainly ministered unto; and chief of all, the hills above Nazareth, sloping down to his old home.—*Kuskin*: *Frondes Agrestes*. It was the evening hour when he ascended, and as he climbed the hill-slope with those three chosen witnesses,—"The Sons of Thunder and the Man of Rock,"—doubtless a solemn gladness dilated his whole soul; a sense not only of the heavenly calm which that solitary communion with his heavenly Father would breathe upon the spirit, but still more than this, a sense that he would be supported for the coming hour by ministrations not of earth, and illuminated with a light which needed no aid from sun or moon or stars. He went up to be prepared for death; and he took his three apostles with him, that haply, having seen his glory,—the glory, of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,—their hearts might be fortified, their faith strengthened, to gaze unshaken on the shameful insults and unspeakable humiliation of the cross. There, then, he knelt and prayed; and as he prayed he was elevated far above the toil and misery of the world which had rejected him.—*Farrar's Life of Christ*. It is impossible, on any fair interpretation of the narrative, to regard the transfiguration otherwise than as a real and a supernatural occurrence.—*Cook*.

2. And was transfigured, &c. Elsewhere in the New Testament (with the exception of the parallel, Mark ix. 2) the word is used only in its spiritual sense, and is there rendered "transformed." St. Luke does not use the word, but describes the change which it implies, "the fashion of his countenance became other than it had been" (ix. 29). He adds the profoundly significant fact that *this was while he was in the act of prayer*. It was in that act of communion with his Father that the divine glory flowed out into visible brightness. Transcendent as the manifestation was, it has its lower analogies in the radiance which made the face of Stephen "as the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15); yet more in the glory which shone on the face of Moses when he came down from the mount (Exod. 34: 29); in some faint measure, in what may be called the metamorphic power of prayer, which invests features that have no form or comeliness with the rapture of devout ecstasy.—*Ellicott*. The infinite fulness of the Spirit was poured out over his whole being; the heavenly glory of his nature, which was still concealed under his earthly appearance, now broke forth.—*Lange's Leben Jesu*. There was undoubtedly an external heavenly illumination which surrounded Moses and Elijah as they descended from heaven, which would account for the brilliancy of Christ's garments, which is hardly accounted for by this bursting forth of his inherent glory.—*Schaff*. This manifestation of his glory was an anticipation of his future state of glory.—*Meyer*. The nature of the transfiguration is indicated by the description which follows, and yet more definitely by the accounts of Mark and Luke. His face shone as the sun; his garments became white "as the light" (Matt.), i.e., luminously white, "as no fuller on earth can whiten them" (Mark), i.e., with a supernatural whiteness; "white and glistering" (Luke), i.e., flashing. The transfiguration then consisted, apparently, in a luminous appearance which pervaded the whole face and figure of Jesus (compare Exod. 34: 29, 30). As Christ took on him human nature and condition for converse with man, so here, it appears to me, he is represented as taking on the form and condition of the spirits, for the purpose of communion with the spiritual world. Observe that it took place *before them*, i.e., the disciples, not during their sleep. They saw, not only Christ after he was transfigured, but also the process of the change, as it came over him. It is true, Luke's account, in our English version, implies that they were asleep, and were wakened out of it to behold the glory (Luke 9: 32). But the

3. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4. Then answered ¹ Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make ²

¹ See chap. 11: 25. ² Comp. Mark 9: 5. Luke 9: 33.

original does not justify this interpretation. — *Abbott*. The phrase in Luke, "when they were awake," means in the original, *yet having remained awake*. — *Schaff*.

3. And behold. Indicating that this was even more marvellous than his own transformation. — *Lange*. There appeared unto them (i.e., the disciples) Moses and Elias, or Elijah. These persons were really present. It was not a vision, as is plain from the account of Luke. — *Schaff*. The implication is, that they not only saw the appearance, but recognized, in the persons, Moses and Elijah. How this recognition was afforded, is not stated; perhaps by a subtle spiritual power of recognition. We often appear to ourselves to recognize in dreams persons we have never seen: why may not the soul, in special spiritual conditions, possess a similar power of recognizing, in reality, unknown persons? That Moses and Elijah were recognized *at the time*, by the apostles, is evident from Peter's proposition (ver. 4). — *Abbott*. Moses represented "the law," Elijah "the prophets," and both together the whole testimony of the Old-Testament scriptures, and the Old-Testament saints, to Christ; now not borne in a book but by living men, not to a coming but a come Messiah; *visibly*, for they "appeared," and *audibly*, for they "spoke." — *F. and B.* Thus, while false Judaism rejects the Messiah, the true owns and adores him in the persons of its two most illustrious representatives. The old covenant and the new meet together on the glorious mount, as righteousness and peace shall soon meet on that other hill which is already before the eye of Jesus. — *De Pressensh*. The close of the ministry of each was not after the "common death of all men." No man knew of the sepulchre of Moses (Deut. 34: 6), and Elijah had passed away in the chariot and horses of fire (2 Kings 2: 11). Both were associated in men's minds with the glory of the kingdom of the Christ. The Jerusalem Targum on Exod. 12 connects the coming of Moses with that of the Messiah. Another Jewish tradition predicts his appearance with that of Elijah. — *Ellicott*. Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah the chief of the prophets, both appear talking with Christ the source of the gospel, to show that they are all one, and agree in one. Whatever the seeming differences and contradictions, there is in reality only harmony among them, — the different parts of one great anthem, which is filling the earth with the music of heaven. — *P.* Talking with him. St. Luke (9: 31) adds the subject of their communing: "They spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." It was a witness that the spirits of the lawgiver and the prophet accepted the sufferings and the death which had shaken the faith of the disciples as the necessary conditions of the Messianic kingdom. — *Ellicott*. As envoys from the eternal Majesty, they audibly affirmed that it was the will of the Father, that with his own precious blood he should make atonement for sin. They impressed a new seal upon the ancient, eternal truth, that the partition-wall which sin had raised could be broken down by no other means than by the power of his sufferings; that he, as the good Shepherd, could only ransom his sheep with the price of his own life. Such was the substance of the conversation on the holy mount. — *Krummacher*.

4. Then answered Peter. The foremost to speak; awe silences the rest, but not him. Compare with his characteristic impetuosity here, the incidents recorded in John 20: 5, 6; 21: 7. Luke gives the explanation of his speaking. He spake "as they [i.e., Moses and Elijah] were departing," evidently to hinder their departure, and induce them to remain. — *Abbott*. Lord, it is good for us to be here. For "Lord," St. Luke has "Master;" St. Mark (giving, probably, as elsewhere, the very word uttered), "Rabbi." It is not easy to trace the thoughts that passed rapidly through the soul of the disciple in that moment of amazement. Afterwards — if we may judge from St. Mark's account (9: 6), "he knew not what to answer, for they were sore afraid," or St. Luke's (9: 33) "not knowing what he said" — he could hardly explain them himself. We may venture to see in the very *naïveté* of the words a touch of originality and unexpectedness which, as far as it goes, attests the truthfulness of the narrative. What the words seem to imply is: (1) An abounding joy at being thus brought into a glory which fulfilled the apostle's brightest hopes. It was indeed good to be thus carried, as it were, into paradise, or the third heaven, and to hear there words which human lips might not reproduce. (2) His thoughts travelled back to the records of the exodus, when the Lord talked with Moses in the tabernacle (Exod. 33: 7-10). What if like tabernacles could now be made for those three glorious forms, that all Israel might come and gaze, and hear and worship?

here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice¹ out of the cloud, which said, This² is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6. And when the disciples³ heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7. And Jesus came and touched⁴ them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.⁵

8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

¹ 2 Pet. 1: 17. ² See chap. 3: 17. ³ 2 Pet. 1: 18. ⁴ Dan. 8: 18; 9: 21; 10: 10, 18. ⁵ Chap. 14: 27.

Would not this be a better consummation than the shame and death at Jerusalem? Would it not meet the belief of the scribes and of the people, that "Elias must first come"? — *Ellicott*. It often appears to the Christian to be good to abide with Christ in spiritual exaltation. But such hours are rare, and meant to be. It is better to descend and go about with Christ doing good. The one is often *our wish*, the other is *his will*. — *Abbott*. Let us make here three tabernacles. Tents, booths (see Lev. 23: 34), for shelter, and a dwelling. This expressed Peter's desire to abide there. Yet he would build *three*, not *six*. He would plan only to keep these glorious personages there. — *Jacobus*. One for thee, one for Moses, one for Elias. Peter, in his inconsiderateness, may have thought of inaugurating a new communion, with Christ for its centre, Moses its lawgiver, and Elijah its zealot (prophet), thus amalgamating *externally* the Old and New Testaments. — *Schaff*.

5. Behold, a bright cloud. A luminous cloud, not dark like that on Sinai. It was analogous to the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night in the wilderness, and to the shechinah of the Old Testament; a *symbol* of the glory resting on the New Testament Church, separating between the holy and the unholy, and a *type* of the splendor of the New Jerusalem. — *Schaff*. Overshadowed them. The language of the English version in Luke would leave the impression that all, including the disciples, entered this cloud; but such is not the significance of the original. Christ, Moses, and Elijah are alone represented as entering into the cloud, which separated them from the disciples' sight, and out of this cloud the voice spake to the disciples. By the disciples such a luminous cloud would be instantly accepted as a symbol of the divine presence. — *Abbott*. A voice out of the cloud. The same voice which had once before been heard at the baptism, and which should salute him again as he stood on the threshold of his passion; thus at the beginning, at the middle, and at the close of his ministry. — *Trench*. Such a confirmation of the great confession of Peter was never to be forgotten. Almost a generation later, when he wrote his second epistle, the remembrance of this night was as vivid as ever. "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory." — *Graikie*. Hear ye him. These words and the disappearance of the heavenly messengers are symbolically connected, as signifying that God, who had spoken in times past to the fathers by the prophets, henceforth would speak by his Son. — *Afford*. They also indicate our Lord as completely fulfilling the prophecy of Moses (Deut. 18: 15-19), which was partially fulfilled in Joshua. The remembrance of this voice may have been present to the mind of St. Peter when he cites the above prophecy, and applies it to Christ (Acts 3: 22). — *Cook*.

Ver. 6. And when the disciples heard it, &c. Vers. 6, 7, peculiar to Matthew. The fear began when the cloud overshadowed the Lord and the two Old Testament saints (compare Luke ix. 34), but culminated at this visible and audible manifestation of the Father's presence. — *Schaff*.

7. Touched them . . . Be not afraid. Observe that fear is the common effect in the human mind of any experience which brings near to us the invisible world. — *Abbott*. Act and words were both expressive of an almost brotherly tenderness. The touch of the hand they had so often grasped, — as, e.g., in 14: 31, — the familiar words that had brought courage to their fainting hearts in the hour of danger (14: 27), these recall them again to the realities of life. They need not fear the glory of the divine Presence, for he is with them still as its most perfect manifestation. — *Ellicott*.

8. They saw no man, save Jesus only. The words, following as they do upon the "Be not afraid," imply a marked contrast to Peter's rash utterance. It was *not* "good" for frail men such as they were to tarry long in the immediate glory of the Presence. It was

9. And¹ as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell² the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias³ must first come?

11. And Jesus answered and said

unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore⁴ all things.

12. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done⁵ unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise⁶ shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

¹ Mark 9: 9-13. ² Chap. 8: 4. ³ See chap. 11: 14. ⁴ Comp. Mal. 4: 6. Luke 1: 16, 17. ⁵ Chap. 14: 3, 10. ⁶ Vers. 22, 23. Chap. 16: 21.

a relief to see "Jesus only" with them, as they had been wont to see him. So in our own lives, moments of spiritual ecstasy are few and far between; and it is good for us that it should be so, and that we should be left to carry the fragrance and power of their memory into the work of our common life, and the light of our common day. — *Ellicott*.

9. Tell the vision to no man, until . . . is risen. *The vision.* Literally, "the thing seen," equivalent to the expression in St. Mark, "what things they had seen." The word does not imply any unreality. — *Cook*. They were not to tell it until he had risen, for then it would be understood, and not till then could it have its full force, but would be only abused to the hinderance of his work. Mark says, they kept this saying with themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead should mean (Mark 9: 10). Luke says, they kept it close, and told no man "in those days." — *Jacobus*.

10. Why then say the scribes? The word then clearly implies an inference from the preceding command. "If we are to keep the vision secret, what is the meaning of the doctrine that the coming of Elias must precede the manifestation of the Messiah? Is not this which we have seen the coming of Elias, and should it not be proclaimed as a sign that the Messiah's kingdom is at hand?" — *Cook*. If this was not the coming of Elijah, was he yet to come? If it was, how was it so secret and so short? — *Alford*.

11. Elias (Elias is the Greek form for Elijah) truly shall first come. That is, this is true as it was prophesied. And restore all things, as was predicted by Malachi, "turning the hearts of the fathers unto the children," &c., reforming the people in their scriptural views, and in their relations to the covenant made with their fathers, and doing this thoroughly, as the parallel form of expression imports, fathers to children and children to fathers. — *Jacobus*.

12. Elias is come already. So far as the prophecy of Malachi required the coming of Elijah, that prophecy had been fulfilled in the Baptist, all unconscious of it as he was, as coming in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1: 17). The disciples need not look for any other personal appearance. The use of the present and future tenses in ver. 11 point to a deeper truth, which they were to learn afterwards. The Elijah ministry, the work of the preacher of repentance, is not a transient phenomenon belonging to one stage only of the Church's history, but was to be, throughout the ages, on to the end of all things, the indispensable preparation for the coming of the Lord. Only through it could all things be restored, and the path made ready for the heralds of forgiveness and of peace. — *Ellicott*. Knew him not, i.e., did not recognize him. Have done whatsoever they listed. It is significant that our Lord charges the guilt of the rejection and death of John upon the scribes and the people at large, with no special reference to the tetrarch Antipas. The passions and intrigues of the palace were but instruments working out the intent of the Pharisees and Sadducees. — *Ellicott*. Likewise shall the Son of man suffer of them. Another instance of what may be called the new color which from the time of the Transfiguration spreads over our Lord's teaching. All is, in one aspect, darker, sadder, more sombre. He is drawing nearer to the cross, and he brings the thought of the cross closer to the minds of his disciples. — *Ellicott*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Carlyle, speaking of the Reformation, says, "Are there in this nation enough of heroic men, enough to venture forward and to battle for God's truth versus the Devil's falsehood. Once risen into this divine white heat of temper, *were it only for a season and not again*, it is henceforth considerable through all its remaining history. Nations are benefited for ages by being thrown once into divine white heat in this manner. And no nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much." So the transfiguration experiences help us all the rest of our lives. Revival heights bless us evermore; and when they have passed away, and we have come down *into the valleys*, the blessings have not left us.

II. In these highest experiences Christians become one, all sects are united. Dr. Adams, in his address of welcome to the Evangelical Alliance, says, "It has been said, whether by poetry or science it matters not, there is a certain point in the upper air in which all discordant sounds of the earth, the rattle of wheels, the chime of bells, the roll of the drum, the laugh of the child, the moan of the beggar, meet and blend in perfect harmony."

III. Astronomers say that all the visible heavens, suns, stars, planets, comets, are moving around one point in the heavens, the star Alcyone in the Pleiades. So all the Bible, the law and the prophets, move around the cross of Christ as its centre.

PRACTICAL.

1. There is a glory in the world, and in the Bible, and in Christ, far beyond what is seen by most people at most times.

2. Ver. 1. Those only who have been most faithful can have the highest experiences. Daily faithfulness is the ladder to heaven.

3. Our richest experiences come through and during prayer.

4. Ver. 3. All dispensations are united in Christ.

5. Christians are nearest together in doctrine when together in heavenly experience.

6. These heavenly experiences come but seldom, but bless all our lives.

7. Ver. 4. We must not try to stay on the mountain, but come down to the lowly duties of life, but better able to do them.

8. We learn from this the reality, and something of the nature, of the spiritual world.

9. The intermediate state is one of consciousness and glory.

10. A true revival of religion is always a revival of practical morality in daily life.

11. Be with Jesus in the closet, in the temple, at the communion, in the furnace, in death.

12. Jesus only (ver. 8). Not Moses and the law alone, or the stern prophet only, but Jesus, who includes all the good of both. If we have Jesus, we have all.—*Spurgeon*.

LESSON VI.—MAY 9, 1880.

JESUS AND THE YOUNG.—MATT. 19: 13-26.

TIME.—Early winter; the last part of A.D. 29, several months after the Transfiguration (our last lesson), and on Jesus' last journey through Peræa to Jerusalem.

PLACE.—In the neighborhood of Bēthāb'ārā in Peræa. Peræa is that part of the Holy Land east of the southern Jordan and the Dead Sea.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, of Galilee; Herod Philip, of other parts.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Chaps. 17: 14 to 19: 12. Mark 9: 14-50. Luke 9: 37-50. John, chaps. 7-10. Luke 9: 51-56; 10-18: 14.

INTRODUCTION.

Jesus, upon coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, healed the lunatic. He then returned with the twelve for the last time to the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Immediately after the incidents of chap. 18, Matthew and Mark mention the final departure of Jesus from Galilee into that part of Peræa which belonged to the province of Judæa (Matt. 19: 1. Mark 10: 1). But this interval between chaps. 18 and 19 is to be

13. ¶ Then¹ were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14. But Jesus said, Suffer² little

children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

¹ Mark 10: 13-16. Luke 18: 15-17. ² Chap. 18: 3.

filled up by Christ's visit to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, Oct. 11, and the feast of dedication in December, and many other important incidents, which are related by Luke and John. Jesus was slowly travelling, and teaching in Peræa near Jordan, on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified, when the incident of the lesson for to-day occurred. — P.

EXPLANATORY.

13. As I look at Christ in this, the most stirring period of his history, with the dark events of his last agonies thickening on his horizon, condescending to take little children in his arms and bless them, I feel deeper chords in my nature touched than when I see him hush the furious tempest, or raise the buried dead. — *David Thomas, D.D.* There were brought unto him. The fact that they were brought (we may assume by their mothers) indicates that there was something in our Lord's look and manner that attracted children, and impressed their parents with the feeling that he loved them. That feeling, we may well believe, was deepened by his acts and words when he had taken in his arms the child whom he set before his disciples as a pattern of the true greatness of humility, and taught them that the angels of those little ones beheld the face of his Father (18: 3). — *Ellicott*. Little children. The term (the two words are one in the Greek) is a general one, not pointing out children of any particular age, like our word "child." — *Ripley*. That he should put his hands on them, and pray. (Utter, or ask for, a blessing.) This was the customary sign of a blessing. In the act of pronouncing it, the hand was laid on the head of the person, expressing, by such a gesture, the idea of conveying the benefit. See Gen. 48: 14. Matt. 9: 18. It has always been natural to seek such a communication of good, or sign of it, from the excellent whom we venerate. — *Jacobus*. The disciples rebuked them; that is, *reproved* those who brought them, found fault with them, and signified their displeasure at this. They thought it a small matter, or a mere obtuseness of the parents, interrupting Christ to show their children, or that children had nothing to do with Christ, nor he with them. This last would have seemed the point aimed at in Christ's reply, and it is the sad mistake of many. — *Jacobus*. The disciples were engaged in an interesting discussion about marriage, &c. Abstract theories about household relations should not stand between the Lord and little children. — *Schaff*.

14. But Jesus said, Suffer (allow them to come) little children. Mark adds that he was much displeased. Let the little children alone, and hinder them not from coming to me. The language of rebuke in the original is stronger than in our version. The above rendering may help to give to the English reader its tone. — *Abbott*. For of such. Such childlike persons (Luke 18: 17; chap. 18: 3-6). And also little children in the literal sense, or infants (Luke 18: 15), called "*my little lambs*." — *Binney*. Is the kingdom of heaven; that is, the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. — *Ellicott*. It is made up of such persons: only such can enter it. — There are two kingdoms, — one of darkness, the other of light; one of good, the other of evil; one of Satan, the other of God, — in which every person is of necessity; for there is no third kingdom. The children belong in the Lord's kingdom, until they voluntarily depart from it to enter, by deliberate sin, the kingdom of Satan. — *Abbott*.

15. He laid his hands on them. St. Mark records, as before, the act of caressing tenderness: "He folded them in his arms, and laid his hands upon them." A loving act twice blessed because done in so loving a manner. If Jesus so loved little children, we may well trust to his loving care in his beautiful home those of our children whom he takes from us to himself. Jesus' love of children soothes much of the sorrow in their death. — P. Jesus was the first great teacher of men who showed a genuine sympathy for childhood, — perhaps the only teacher of antiquity who cared for childhood as such. Plato treats of children and their games; but he treats them from the standpoint of a publicist: they are elements not to be left out in constructing society. But Jesus was the first who loved childhood for the sake of childhood. Until Jesus Christ, the world had no place for childhood in its thoughts. When he said, "Of such is the kingdom of

16. ¶ And,¹ behold, one came and said unto him, Good² Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none*

good but one, *that is*, God: but if³ thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou⁴ shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou

¹ Mark 10: 17-27. Luke 18: 18-27. ² Comp. Luke 10: 25-28. ³ Lev. 18: 5. Neh. 9: 29. Ezek. 30: 19.

⁴ Exod. 20: 12-16. Deut. 5: 16-29. Rom. 13: 9.

heaven," it was a revelation. — *E. Eggleston, Christ in Literature*. This passage is fragrant with the love of Christ for little children. — *Abbott*. See Illustrative, I.

16. And, behold, one came. This incident is recounted also in Mark 10: 17-22, and Luke 18: 18-23. The three accounts should be carefully compared by the student. This case presents some remarkable points. (1) The man was of irreproachable moral character; and this amidst all the temptations of *youth* — for he was a "young man" (chap. 19: 22) — and *wealth*, for "he was very rich" (ver. 22. Mark 10: 22). But (2) restless, notwithstanding, his heart craves eternal life. (3) He so far believed in Jesus as to be persuaded he could authoritatively direct him on this vital point. (4) So earnest is he, that he comes "running" and even "kneeling before him," and that when he was gone forth *into the way* (Mark 10: 17), — the high-road, by this time crowded with travellers to the passover. — *J. F. and B. Good Master*. The word rendered *master* properly means *teacher*. This young man addressed the Saviour with the same pompous title that he would have used in speaking to a Jewish doctor of the law. — *Ripley*. What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? In St. Mark 10: 17, and St. Luke 18: 18, and in some of the oldest manuscripts of St. Matthew, "that I may *inherit* eternal life." The question exhibits the highest and noblest phase of Pharisaism. The seeker has a firm belief in something that he knows as "eternal life." He thirsts for it eagerly. He believes that it is to be won, as a perpetual inheritance, by some one good deed of exceptional and heroic goodness. The Teacher has left on him the impression of a goodness such as he had seldom, if ever, seen before, and as being therefore able to guide him to the supreme Good. — *Ellicott*.

17. Why callest thou me good? &c. The older manuscripts give a different form to our Lord's answer: "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? There is one that is the Good." In either case the answer has the same force. The questioner had lightly applied the word "good" to One whom he as yet regarded only as a human teacher, to an act which, it seemed to him, was in his own power to perform. What he needed, therefore, was to be taught to deepen and widen his thoughts of goodness until they rose to Him in whom alone it was absolute and infinite, through fellowship with whom only could any teacher rightly be called good, and from whom alone could come the power to do any good thing. — *Ellicott*. Christ probes the young man's faith with a question whose meaning may be thus interpreted: "Why call you me Good Master? There is but one good, namely, God. Do you recognize in me a divine Master in truth, whose word is law?" And to this question the young man makes no response. Then Christ probes him with a second test. To those who see in this question a repudiation of the divinity of Jesus Christ, Stier replies, "Either, There is none good but God; Christ is good; therefore Christ is God: or, There is none good but God; Christ is not God; therefore Christ is not good." There is no answer to this but to deny the sinlessness of Christ. — *Abbott*. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. The Saviour shaped his reply in such a manner as ultimately to expose to the young man's own view his deficiencies, and his need of something for salvation different from what he had heretofore supposed. At the same time he exhibited the true principle which regulates the bestowal of divine favor. Obedience to God's commands, unfailing and universal, will secure his approbation. This rule is, indeed, properly speaking, applicable only to those who have never sinned. Still it is a true principle, to the spirit of which faith in the Saviour brings us; and the statement of which, in the case of the young ruler, was most happily adapted to lead him to a conviction of his being utterly deficient in the sight of God. — *Ripley*. What follows shows that his obedience, however strict, did not recognize God as the supreme good, and no goodness is perfect without a supreme love of God.

18, 19. He saith unto him, Which? Literally, of *what kind*? The questioner has been trained in the language of the schools, has heard debates as to which was the great commandment of the Law (22: 36). Which class of commandments is he to keep, that he

shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19. Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect,² go *and* sell³ that thou

¹ Lev. 19: 18. Chap. 22. ² See chap. 5: 48. ³ Luke 12: 33. Comp. Acts 2: 45; 4: 34, 35.

may win eternal life? — *Ellicott*. Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, &c. Jesus, as the youth wanted to do something, tells him merely of the second table; for, as has been well remarked, "Christ sends the proud to the law, and invites the humble to the gospel." — *Farrar*. The change in the order of the commandments, so that the fifth follows those which in the Decalogue it precedes, seems to imply a design to lead the seeker through the negative to the positive forms of law; through definite prohibitions of single acts to the commandments which were "exceeding broad," as fulfilled only in the undefined region of the affections. — *Ellicott*.

20. All these things have I kept, &c. What lack I yet? The latter query must not be regarded as an expression of satisfied self-righteousness, as if it implied, "In that case I lack nothing." It is indeed true that the young man was still self-righteous. He had no conception of the spirituality, the depth, or the height of the commandments of God. Taking only the letter of the law, he considered himself blameless, and perhaps even righteous, before God. Yet his heart misgave him, and he felt that he still lacked something. Under this sense of want, he put the question to the Saviour, as if he would have said, "What is it, then, that I yet lack? All these things have not given me peace of mind." That such is the correct view of the passage, appears both from the statement in Mark, "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him," and from the great struggle through which he afterward passed. — *Lange*. He throws the young man back upon himself, compels him to give the inventory of his own moral goodness, and then to confess his own sense of lack. An ordinary teacher would have endeavored to convince him of his need: Christ compels him to confess it. — *Abbott*.

21. If thou wilt be perfect. Mark and Luke: "One thing thou lackest." One duty still remained to make his obedience complete, judged from his own point of view. Not that he had done all except this one duty; but a test is proposed, to prove that the whole obedience lacked the proper motive. — *Schaff*. Go and sell that thou hast. The injunction of the Lord is manifestly intended to bring out the fact that the young man had made an idol of his riches, and hence that he utterly contravened the spirit, even of the first commandment. Substantially, this demand of Christ imports the same thing as the call addressed to all his disciples, — to deny themselves, to take up the cross, and to follow him. In this sense, then, the injunction applies to every Christian. All that belongs to a believer is in reality not his, but the Lord's property. — *Lange*. The one thing which he lacked was not, that he did not sell all his goods, and give them to the poor, but that there was something which he valued more than his allegiance to God. The outward test revealed the inward want; and this inward want, loving the things of God less than the things of the world, was the fatal defect which Jesus, in thus bringing it to his knowledge, would have him supply. — *Morrison*. But sell not all thou hast, except thou come and follow me; that is, except thou have a vocation, wherein thou mayest do as much good with little means as with great. — *Lord Bacon*. Not all disciples are required to abandon their property, any more than all are required to abandon their business with James and John and Matthew (1 Cor. 7: 17, 20, 24); but all are required to hold their property and use their industry for Christ, and subject to his orders, as interpreted by his providence, and for both be ready to give him an account (Matt. 25: 14-30). — *Abbott*. It is no sin to be rich, but it is a sin to love riches, which the poorest may do; while the rich man may glorify God and benefit man by his wealth. — *Schaff*. Shalt have treasure in heaven. The parallelism with the Sermon on the Mount should not be forgotten (v. 20). The "treasure" is the "eternal life" which the younger ruler was seeking, the memory of good deeds, the souls helped and saved, the character formed and perfected, the vision of the presence of God. — *Ellicott*. Come and follow me. To follow Jesus then meant to be a personal attendant on his ministry; to go about with him from place to place, as well as to imitate and obey him. Now it means, 1st, to obey his commandments; 2d, to imitate his example, and to live like him. — *Barnes*. The final test. Whenever property interferes with following Christ, it must be given up; and he who would be a Christian must be ready to relinquish it for Christ's sake, not to win salvation, nor to buy a superior place in heaven. — *Schaff*.

hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure¹ in heaven: and come and follow me.

22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23. ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that ^arich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24. And ^aagain I say unto you, It

is easier for a camel⁴ to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26. But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men⁵ this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

¹ Chap. 6: 20. ² See chap. 13: 22. ³ Comp. Mark 10: 24. ⁴ Chap. 23: 24. ⁵ Gen. 18: 14. Job 42: 2. Mark 14: 36.

22. He went away sorrowful . . . he had great possessions. It was too much. The young ruler went away very sorrowful, grief in his heart, and a cloud upon his brow, for he had great possessions. He preferred the comforts of earth to the treasures of heaven; he would not purchase the things of eternity by abandoning those of time: he made, as Dante calls it, "the great refusal." And so he vanishes from the Gospel history; nor do the evangelists know any thing of him further. — *Farrar*. Religion cannot yield us the fulness of its blessing till it brings the heart under the completeness of its gentle captivity to Christ. Submission first; then peace, and joy, and love. "Jesus, beholding him, loved him;" yet sent him away sorrowing. How tender, and yet how true! It is because he would have us completely happy, that he requires a complete submission. "One thing" ~~is~~ not be left lacking. Whosoever would enter into the full strength and joy of a disciple must throw his whole heart upon the altar. — *F. D. Huntington*.

The rest of this chapter, and the parable which constitutes the first sixteen verses of chapter following, are closely connected, and constitute one discourse growing out of preceding incident. Parallel to this chapter, to its close, are Mark 10: 23-31. Luke 14: 30. — *Abbott*. A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven. With difficulty. Christ here teaches what was shown in this case, that it is *hard*—not *impossible*, but extremely difficult—for a rich man to get to heaven, because it is found hard to put Christ's will before his worldly possessions. Mark has it, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches." Luke, "They that have riches." — *Jacobus*.

Easier for a camel. The camel being the largest animal with which the Jews acquainted, its name became proverbial for denoting any thing remarkably large; camel's passing through a needle's eye" came, by consequence, as appears from abbinical writings, to express a thing absolutely impossible. — *George Campbell*. A needle. Either the small door sometimes made in the city gates, called the needle by the Arabs, — large enough for a man, but too small for a camel, — or rather the needle of burnished iron, from two to five inches long, or their large ivory tape — *Van Lennep*. The distinguished and worldly honored company of Christian Mammas appear to the eye of my imagination as a drove of camels heavily laden, yet all at rest, and each in the confident expectation of passing through the eye of the needle stop or halt, both beast and burden. — *S. T. Coleridge*. Than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. A rich man rather means one who loves his riches, and makes an idol of them; who supremely desires to be rich, — "them that trust in riches." While he has this it is literally impossible that he should be a Christian. For religion is the love of God rather than the world; the love of Jesus and his cause, more than gold. Still a man may love much property, and not have this feeling. He may have great wealth, and love it more; as a poor man may have little, and love that little more than God. — *Barnes*.

Who then can be saved? Since all may have some possessions, and naturally have more. Their temporal views of the kingdom were also mixed with their quest.

Schaff. With men this is impossible. Jesus readily acknowledged that power superior to man's is necessary in order so to affect the human heart, that salvation may be secured. So many allurements do wealth and worldly avocations present, and so liable are we to be unduly engaged in the cares of the present life, that we are in imminent danger of neglecting our spiritual interests. Without a counteracting influence from above, the desire of riches "drowns men in destruction and perdition." Let us watch against the love of this

world, and constantly pray God to bestow on us durable riches and righteousness, "treasure in heaven," even at the expense of all earthly wealth. — *Ripley*.

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An excellent illustration of the religious care for children is in "*The Sunday School Times*," summer of 1878, in report of a sabbath-school convention and the speeches of Beecher and Tyng, by H. Clay Trumbull. Bushnell's "*Christian Nurture*;" F. A. G. Tholuck's sermon, "The Christian Life a Glorified Childhood;" Spurgeon, Series 8; E. Payson, "How Little Children are prevented from coming to Christ;" Professor W. G. T. Shedd's "*Sermons to the Natural Man*." On "Christianity requires the temper of childhood," and also on "the sin of omission," H. W. Beecher, Series 5. John Wesley, sermon on "Riches."

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Dr. Tyng, sen., of New York, said that in all his ministry he had never hesitated, when the choice must be made between one child and two adults, to take the child. "It seems to me that the Devil would never ask any thing more of a minister than to have him look upon his mission as chiefly to the grown-up members of his congregation, while somebody else was to look after the children. I can see the Devil standing at that door, and saying to the minister on this platform, 'Now you just stand there, and fire away at the old folks; and I'll stand here, and steal away the little ones, as the Indians catch ducks, swimming under them, catching them by the legs, and pulling them under.'" — *H. Clay Trumbull, in Sunday School Times*.

II. Going to Jesus. — A Christian mother was once showing her little girl, about five years old, a picture representing Jesus holding an infant in his arms, while the mothers were pushing their children towards him. "There, Carrie," said her mother, "this is what I would have done with you if I had been there." — "I wouldn't be pushed to Jesus," said little Carrie, with beautiful and touching earnestness: "I'd go to him without pushing." — *Biblical Treasury*.

III. "Mamma loves me. She loves me even when I am naughty, but she don't love my naughtiness." — *Margie Cowan*. It is the same with Jesus' love to children.

IV. The needle's eye. — This metaphor finds a parallel in the proverb which is quoted to show the difficulty of accomplishing any thing. "Just as soon will an elephant pass through the spout of a kettle." — *Roberts*.

V. Influence of riches. — Many a Christian do you find among the rich and the titled, who, as a less encumbered man, might have been a resolute soldier of the cross; but he is now only a realization of the old Pagan fable — a spiritual giant buried under a mountain of gold. — *F. W. Robertson*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 13-15. We should lead our children very early to Jesus.
2. Children can become true Christians very young.
3. It is a very strong motive for parents to become Christians, in order that they may train their children aright.
4. We should go with our children to church, to sabbath school, to prayer, to Jesus; not send them alone.
5. Children are hindered from coming to Christ, by neglect, by example, by false teaching, by fault-finding at good people and good things.
6. We can trust our little children to the love and care of such a Saviour, and mourn not as others do, when they die.
7. Ver. 16, &c. Respectable morality is not enough for salvation, for it may exist with a heart far from God.
8. We are often mistaken to the amount of our goodness.
9. We must give up our souls, and all we have, to Christ, to use as he bids us.
10. Riches by engendering pride, self-sufficiency, cares, and selfishness, often by being gained or kept by fraud and oppression, keep many from the kingdom.
11. The real evil is in not the amount, but the love, of riches, — to want is as bad as to have.
12. Never despair for ourselves or others so long as our God can do all things.

LESSON VII. — MAY 16, 1880.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST. — MATT. 22 : 1-14.

TIME. — Spring of A.D. 30. Passion week, Tuesday, April 4, three days before the crucifixion. This was the last day of his public ministry. It is about three months after the last lesson.

PLACE. — The temple at Jerusalem.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa ; Herod Antipas, of Galilee ; Herod Philip, other parts.

INTERVENING HISTORY. — After blessing the little children (our last lesson) Jesus proceeds toward Jerusalem. He raises Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, and spends most of the winter and early spring in the vicinity of Jerusalem, preaching and teaching.

INTRODUCTION.

This parable, as also those which precede it, was a part of the instruction given by Christ in the temple at the close of his public ministry. It is closely connected with the preceding parable (chap. 21 : 33-46), — the wicked husbandmen.

Tuesday, the fourth day of April, was by far the most eventful in the life of Christ, prior to his passion and death. On the evening of that day, and for that day's utterances, not at his more formal trial, he was condemned to die. When he first entered the temple it was evident that systematic plans had been formed to silence him (Luke 19 : 47, 48). Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians united against him ; assumed to be his disciples ; mingled their questions with those of honest inquirers ; endeavored to entrap him into answers that should arouse popular prejudice, or embroil him with the Roman government ; plied him with flatteries ; and, praising his boldness and independence, sought to cajole him. Hitherto Christ had either openly refused or successfully evaded all such questions. He now pursued a different course ; sought to draw out the hierarchy ; made plain to all the people the ineradicable antagonism between him and the priesthood ; and closed with a solemn and terrible denunciation of them, which yet ended in an outcry of infinite pathos, of divine piety and compassion (23 : 37-39). — *Abbott*. Mark states (12 : 12), that after the parable of the wicked husbandmen the rulers "left him, and went their way ;" hence this parable (peculiar to Matthew) was not spoken directly to the rulers. Ver. 1, however, indicates that it was aimed at their thoughts and designs. — *Schaff*.

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| 1. And Jesus answered ¹ and spake | unto a certain king, which made a |
| unto them again by parables, and said, | marriage for his son, |
| 2. The kingdom of heaven ² is like | 3. And sent ³ forth his servants to |

¹ See chap. 11 : 25. ² Comp. Luke 14 : 16-24. ³ Comp. Prov. 9 : 3, 5.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **Spake unto them again by parables.** Our Lord gave so many of his teachings by parables, partly to conceal the application of the truth until it should gain their concurrence (as Nathan to David), and as in the parable of the two sons (see chap. 21 : 31), and partly to represent the truth in pictures, calculated to interest and impress. This is a different parable from that of the great supper, in Luke 14 : 15, &c., and is recorded by Matthew alone. — *Jacobus*.

2. **The kingdom of heaven.** See Lesson III., First Quarter, ver. 2. **A certain king.** God is represented by this king. **Made a marriage.** The wedding festivities in the East are often protracted for several days, sometimes for an entire week or more (Gen. 29 : 27. Judg. 14 : 12). The word rendered *marriage* in this verse is the same translated *wedding* in the next. It properly signifies the wedding feast. The fact that the guests, i.e., the disciples of Christ, constitute Christ's bride, exemplifies the fact that no figures borrowed from human life are adequate fully to illustrate spiritual truth. Observe, that the Bible by the symbol of the feast represents the religious life as one of joyousness, and by the symbol of the marriage as one of a most sacred and intimate fellowship with God. Observe, too, that the espousal takes place on earth ; the marriage is completed in heaven. — *Abbott*. **For his son.** It was Christ's marriage, i.e., with his covenant people. — *Schaff*.

call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come.

4. Again, he sent¹ forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen² and my fatlings are

killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

5. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6. And the remnant took his ser-

¹ Chap. 21: 36. ² Prov. 9: 2.

3. Sent forth his servants. John the Baptist (Matt. 3: 2); the twelve in that first mission which they accomplished during the lifetime of the Lord (Matt. 10); and the seventy (Luke 10). Not on this occasion to give the first invitation, but to warn those who had been previously invited that the time had come, and the preparations been completed. *Arnot.* Not till the days of John the Baptist was the kingdom indeed present, was there any manifestation of the King's Son, any actual summoning of the guests bidden long before to come to the marriage (Luke 3: 4-6). Them that were bidden; i.e., the Jews. This second invitation is quite according to Eastern manners. Thus Esther invites Haman to a banquet on the morrow (Esth. 5: 8), and, when the time has actually arrived, the chamberlain comes to bring him to the banquet (6: 14). Modern travellers testify to the same custom now of repeating the invitation to a great entertainment at the moment when all things are in actual readiness.—*Trench.* They would not come. The refusal of guests invited to what seems to us so great an honor may seem, at first sight, so contrary to human nature as to be wanting in the element of dramatic probability. That refusal, however, would be natural enough, we must remember, in subjects who were in heart rebellious and disloyal; and it is precisely that character which the parable was intended to portray. The summons, it may be noted, came in the first instance to those who had long ago been "bidden" to the wedding.—*Ellicott.*

4. He sent forth other servants, with a plainer message; probably the apostles and evangelists, as they proclaimed the full gospel to the Jews from the day of Pentecost.—*Schaff.* Behold, I have prepared my dinner. The meal designated is not that which we (English) understand by *dinner*, but the meal (*or iunch*) at noon, with which the course of marriage festivities began. This will give even greater precision to the meaning of the parable, as applying to those preparatory foretastes of the *great feast*, which the Church of God now enjoys. They were called, and the preparations were for the *whole feast*, of which this was the beginning.—*Alford.* My oxen and my fatlings are killed. Probably a figurative allusion to the slaying of the sacrifice, as meat for the feast.—*Schaff.* All things are ready. This represents the substance of their preaching to the Jews,—that the fulness of time had come, the Messiah prophesied had appeared. Obstacles were all removed, all provisions were made (see Acts 2: 38, 39; 3: 19-26; 4: 12).—*Jacobus.* Come unto the marriage. The king graciously assumes that these guests deferred their coming through some misunderstanding, unaware, perhaps, that all the preparations were completed; and, instead of threatening and punishing, only bids the servants whom he now sends, to press the message with greater instance and distinctness than before. Something of this same gracious overlooking of the past breathes through the language of St. Peter in all his discourses after Pentecost. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it." (Acts 3: 17).—*Trench.*

5. They made light of it. All had a guilty contempt for the invitation, which was manifested, however, in two distinct forms: some went away, in indifferent worldliness; others became persecutors of the messengers (ver. 6). Many refer "made light of it" to the indifferent class alone, but the other view is more grammatical. All modes of rejecting the gospel, even persecution, are really making light of it.—*Schaff.* Went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The indifferent are here divided into two classes: one was absorbed by his *possession*, the other by his *getting*.—*Abbott.* The first is the landed proprietor, the second the merchant. The first would *enjoy* what he already possesses, the second would *acquire* what as yet is his only in anticipation. The first represents the rich; the second, those that would be rich. We have here those who are full, and those who are striving to be full; and on both the woe pronounced at Luke 6: 25, has come. This apparent fulness is a real emptiness, keeping men away from Him who would have indeed filled and satisfied their souls.—*Trench.*

6. The remnant (representing the fanatical rulers of the Jews, the Pharisees.—*Schaff*) took his servants . . . entreated them spitefully . . . slew them. Literally fulfilled, in case of the apostles and evangelists. The oppositions to the truth are not merely natu-

Execution of God's providential design —
 some of them in the same place that he had
 fed

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vants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew ¹ *them*.

7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth : and he sent forth his *armies*, and destroyed those *murderers*, and burned up their city.

8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.²

9. Go ye therefore into the highways,³ and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both ⁴ bad and good : and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11. ¶ And when the king came in

¹ See chap. 21 : 35. ² Chap. 10 : 11, 13. Acts 13 : 46. Rev. 3 : 4. ³ Ezek. 21 : 21. Obad. 1 : 14. ⁴ Chap. 13 : 38, 47.

ral, they are also *devilish*. Of those who reject the gospel of the grace of God, there are some who do not so much actively hate it, as love the world better than they love it. We have just heard of these. But there are also those in whom it rouses a fierce opposition, whose pride it wounds, whose self-righteousness it offends ; who also, when they dare, will visit on those that bring the message the hate which they bear to itself. — *Trench*. In our own day, it does not require extraordinary sagacity to perceive the same spirit in the relish and readiness with which certain classes catch up a cry against any one who, not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, has discharged his commission in full. — *Arnott*.

7. When the king (the great God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) heard *thereof*, he was wroth. At the affront put both on his Son, and on himself who had deigned to invite them. A royal feast often possesses a political significance. Thus it has been supposed that the feast recorded in Esther, chap. 1, is identical with the great gathering called when Xerxes (Ahasuerus) was planning his Greek expedition. A refusal to attend such a feast would be significant of rebellion. — *Abbott*. And sent forth his *armies*. The *Romans* are here styled God's armies, just as the Assyrian is styled "the rod of his anger" (Isa. 10 : 5), as being the executors of his judicial vengeance. — *J. F. and B.* This for the Jews as a nation ; but conscience, memory, feeling, passions, and every law of nature within and without us, are God's armies, to destroy the sinner who will not repent. — *P.* Destroyed those *murderers* . . . burned up their city. The direct reference here is, of course, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions 40 years after this. Observe that only the *murderers* are destroyed : those who simply rejected the invitation are only rejected from the supper. Compare Luke 14 : 24, with 19 : 27. I would not press this, except so far as it indicates a gradation in the divine punishments. — *Abbott*. It is *their* city, not any longer the city of the great King, who owns it no more for his own. With a similar threatening Christ says, "Your house is left unto you desolate." — *Trench*. The occurrence of this seventh verse before the opening of the feast to the Gentiles is strictly exact ; for, although the gospel was preached to the Gentiles forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, yet the final rejection of the Jews and the *substitution of the Gentiles* did not take place till that event. — *Alford*.

8. Were not worthy. Compare Acts 13 : 46. Those that refuse God's grace, whatever the excellence of their character, are the *unworthy* : those that show themselves ready to receive it are the *worthy*, whatever the natural poverty of their character (Luke 18 : 10-14). — *Abbott*.

9. Go ye therefore into the highways. It means the square or principal street, into which a number of smaller streets enter ; a place, therefore, of confluence, where many persons would be seen, and persons of all descriptions. — *Barnes*. In the first instance the invitation was limited to the class who had a prescriptive right to appear at court ; when these by their perversity had excluded themselves, the king in his sovereignty extended the invitation generally to the common people, to persons who previously possessed no right of admission, but who obtained the right then and there, by the free act of the sovereign. — *Arnott*.

10. Both bad and good. Observe, the invitation is to be extended without discrimination, and all, both *bad* and *good*, are to be brought to the feast. There is no condition of coming to Christ, but *just to come*. The bad are invited that *they may be made good* (i Cor. 6 : 9-11). Of the "good," Nathanael and Cornelius are illustrations ; of the "bad," Matthew and Zacchæus, and Saul of Tarsus. — *Abbott*. "He loved her foul, that he might make her fair." — *Augustine*.

11. When the king came in to see the guests. It pertained to the dignity of the king, that he should not appear till all were assembled, nor, indeed, till all had occupied

to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:¹

12. And he saith unto him, Friend,² how camest thou in hither not having

a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13. Then said the king to the servants,³ Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast⁴ him into

¹ Comp. 2 Kings 10: 22. ² See chap. 20: 13. ³ See chap. 20: 26. ⁴ See chap. 8: 12.

their places at the banquet. — *Trench.* This represents the coming of Christ at the final judgment, who is here called the king, as in Ps. 2: 6. Zech. 9: 9. — *Binney.* Had not on a wedding garment. This refers to the Eastern custom of presenting festival garments to invited guests. (1 Sam. 18: 4. 2 Kings 5: 5, 22. Esth. 6: 8, 9; 8: 15.) Not to wear the provided garment, especially at a royal marriage, was viewed as the most pointed contempt and insult. It is certain that robes were an important part of Oriental wealth (Josh. 7: 21. Judg. 14: 12), and were often given as marks of peculiar favor (Gen. 41: 42. 1 Sam. 18: 4. Esth. 6: 8), and probably were frequently given out on state occasions to all guests. — *Abbott.* Some customs and allusions connected with the scene remain obscure to us, but the lesson which our Lord intended to teach stands relieved in clearest light and sharpest outline. 1. The wedding garment was something conspicuous and distinctive. As soon as the king entered the room, he detected the single man who wanted it. 2. It was not a necessary part of a man's clothing, but rather a significant badge of his loyalty. The primary use of the symbol was neither to keep the wearer warm, nor to make him elegant, but to manifest his faithfulness. 3. The want of it was a decisive mark of disloyalty. It is confessed and silently assumed that the guest had not, but might have had, the wedding garment on. — *Arnol.* The symbolic meaning of the wedding garment has been a subject of discussion, some Protestant writers having insisted that it represents faith, the Romish writers that it represents charity. Christ gives no interpretation. Here he simply teaches that though all, both bad and good, are invited, no one will be allowed in the heavenly kingdom who is not prepared for the company and the occasion. In what that preparation consists, and how procured, he does not here teach. But other passages in Scripture answer these questions. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa. 64: 6): these God takes from us, that he may clothe us with garments of salvation (Luke 15: 22. Isa. 61: 10), which are washed white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14). These we put on when we put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, in baptism (Rom. 13: 14. Gal. 3: 26, 27), which we do, not merely by a belief in Christ, but by such a personal reception of him, that we lay off the old man and put on a new man in Christ Jesus (Eph. 4: 24. Col. 3: 10-14). Without these garments of holiness, the free gift of God (Rev. 3: 18), none can enter heaven (Rev. 16: 15). The wedding garment, then, is neither charity nor faith, but the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19: 8), i.e., that radical change in character and life wrought by the Spirit of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, without which no man can see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14). To be without a wedding garment, implied that the man thought his usual attire good enough for the king's wedding: he thus represents those who profess to follow Christ, but who think themselves good enough as they are, and do not seek from him that new birth without which no man can see the kingdom of heaven. The lesson, then, of this incident of the wedding garment, is, that no one can enter heaven except through humility and a change of nature; that we must not only accept Jesus Christ openly, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is discrimination in God's kingdom, but to be exercised by the King, not by his servants (Matt. 13: 29, 30), and at the door of the feast, not in the invitation. — *Abbott.*

12. How camest thou? It is implied that it was owing to his own culpable carelessness, as well as to his own disregard of what was due to the king, that he appeared without a wedding garment. — *D. K. Drummond.* We may and ought, when God calls, to come as we are; but we may not, if we would see his face, and enjoy his last feast, remain as we are. — *Stier.* Speechless. It is the terrible silence of conviction. Hardly the most thoughtless have failed to be struck with the force and significance of this part of the representation. Of all the multitude of excuses that now pass current to justify the world's forgetfulness of its Maker, not one rises to his lips. — *William A. Butler.* The judgment will be so conducted, that the condemned will be compelled to own the justice of their sentence. — *Arnol.* Then said the king to the servants. Or to his ministering attendants, rather; for they differ both in name and office from the servants that brought in the guests, being no other than the angels, who shall gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity. — *Trench.*

13. Bind him hand and foot. Expresses the impotence to which in a moment every

The wedding feast which will be in Christ
can alone tell the searching ordeal - when the king
comes in to view the wedding guests -

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outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14. For many are called,¹ but few are chosen.

¹ Rev. 17: 14.

proud fighter against God will be reduced. — *Trench*. Cast him into outer darkness. An emblem of such as are rejected and cast out of the door at the marriage-feast to which they had come. The Jews generally had their great feasts in the evening: those cast out are therefore in darkness. — *Burder*. The kingdom of heaven is represented as one of light and joy: punishment consists in exclusion from God and the companionship of the holy. There is no suggestion here of positive *torments*, although there are such intimations elsewhere (Matt. 13: 50; 18: 34, 35. Mark 9: 43-48. Luke 16: 23). For the most part, the Bible representations of future punishment are of a fixity in a state of sin (Rev. 22: 11), and of banishment from the presence of God (2 Thess. 1: 9). — *Abbott*. It begins within men by shutting out light from the soul, and ends in the shutting-up of souls to the utter deprivation of all light. — *Binney*. To be "outside" at all — or, in the language of Revelation, 22: 15, to be "without" the heavenly city, excluded from its joyous nuptials and glad some festivities — is sad enough in itself, without any thing else. But to find themselves not only excluded from the brightness and glory and joy and felicity of the kingdom above, but thrust into a region of "darkness," with all its horrors, — this is the dismal retribution here announced, that awaits the unworthy at the great day. — *J. F. and B.* Weeping and gnashing of teeth. The sorrow and the rage consequent upon such expulsion. Also a hint at the wretchedness of a future state of punishment. The figures are fearful: black night, grief, and rage. — *Schaff*.

14. Many are called, but few are chosen. This verse is the text of the parable. The many called include, first, the entire Jewish nation, who are not chosen, because they refuse the gospel invitation; second, the Gentiles, of whom they alone are chosen who see and seek in the kingdom of God that in which it consists, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17) — *Abbott*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Arnot on "Parables," pp. 254-279; Trench on "Parables," pp. 217-244; Burder's "Oriental Literature," vol. i. p. 94; Bush's "Illustrations of Scripture," pp. 583, 589; Sermons by F. D. Maurice, Baxter, Griffin, Wesley, South.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Note on ver. 10. The toast. Our country, right or wrong: if right, to keep her right; if wrong, to make her right."

II. The wedding garment. — The rejection of a gift, or the appearance of a slight put upon it, is ever naturally esteemed as a slight and contempt, not of that gift only, but also of the giver. So strongly is this felt, that we are not without example in the modern history of the East (and Eastern manners so little change, that modern examples are nearly as good as ancient) of a vizier having lost his life through this very failing to wear a garment of honor sent to him by the king. Chardin mentions the circumstance. The officer, through whose hands the royal robe was to be forwarded, out of spite sent in its stead a plain habit. The vizier would not appear in the city arrayed in this, lest it should be taken as an evidence that he was in disgrace at court; and put on, in its stead, a royal habit, the gift of the late king, and in that made his public entry into the city. When this was known at court, they declared the vizier a dog, that he had disdainfully thrown away the royal apparel, saying, "I have no need of Sha Sefi's habits!" Their account incensed the king, who severely felt the affront, and it cost the vizier his life. Olearius (Travels) gives an account of himself, with the ambassadors whom he accompanied, being invited to the table of the Persian king. He goes on to say, "It was told us by the ambassador that we, according to their usage, must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king over our dresses, and so appear in his presence." There was, strictly speaking, no changing of apparel, for the garment of honor was either a vest drawn over the other garments, or a mantle hung on the shoulders. Schulz, in his Travels, describes that given to him, as "a long robe with loose sleeves, which hang down (for the arm is not put into them), the white ground of which is goat's hair, mixed with some silver, but the flowers woven in are of gold-colored silk;" and his account of the necessity of putting it on before appearing in the presence of the sultan agrees with that given by the earlier traveller. — *Rosenmüller's Alte und Neue Morgenl.*, vol. v. p. 76.

III. It is a custom in some districts of England to give to all who are invited to their funerals a scarf of black silk, large, conspicuous, and expensive; given by the one who invites, and worn by all who accept. A single person without this badge would be instantly detected, and the omission would be a token of disrespect. — *Arnol*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. Like Christ we should use illustrative teaching.
2. Ver. 2. The gospel is like a feast, delightful, joyous, satisfying, varied, abundant, social, with "a feast of reason and a flow of soul."
3. Vers. 3, 4. Christ desires all to come: he sends his invitations again and again.
4. Vers. 5, 6. Two classes will not enter heaven, — the neglecters and the opposers.
5. Vers. 7, 13. The destruction of the finally impenitent is certain, eternal, terrible.
6. It is love that reveals this in order that men may escape it.
7. Ver. 9. Christians should carry the invitation of Christ to all, even those who seem least likely to come.
8. Ver. 10. All are invited to come "just as they are," but not to *remain* as they are.
9. Ver. 11. We cannot enter the kingdom of heaven without the preparation required.
10. To come without the preparation Christ demands, is an insult to God, as well as contrary to the nature of things, which demand that preparation.
11. All who refuse to love and obey Christ will at length acknowledge themselves to be without excuse.

LESSON VIII. — MAY 23, 1880.

THE JUDGMENT. — MATT. 25: 31-46.

TIME. — Spring of A.D. 30. Passion Week. Tuesday evening, April 5, on the same day that Christ spoke the parable of the last lesson.

PLACE. — Mount of Olives.

RULERS. — Tiberius Caesar, emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa; Herod Antipas, of Galilee; Herod Philip, of other parts.

ORDER OF EVENTS. — After the last public discourse (of which our last lesson was a part), our Lord did not at once leave the temple, but (Mark 12: 41-44. Luke 21: 1-4) sat quietly in the court of the women, looking at those casting in their gifts, to find an opportunity for praising one act of real religion amidst all the hypocrisy he had just denounced. (Reformers may find a lesson here.) In perfect quietude of spirit, not in haste nor anger, he finally forsook "his own," who received him not. As he was finally "departing," his disciples pointed out the magnificence of the various structures composing the temple. This brought out a prediction of its entire destruction. Passing out toward Bethany, he paused upon the Mount of Olives, looking towards the temple, as if still moved with compassion. His disciples (or, more exactly, four of them) inquired of him as to the time and signs of his coming. Chap. 24 is the answer, not yet fully understood. Chap. 25 was spoken on the same occasion. — *Schaff*.

INTRODUCTION.

We have here a picture of the final judgment, not a parable. It comes at the end of the world (of *æon*, present order of things, not of *kosmos*, the physical world), *after* the resurrection (Rev. 20: 11, 12). "This is invariably the divine order: first the resurrection, and then the judgment." — *Sears*. The "day" of judgment is not a day of earthly time and planetary revolution: it means simply the *period* of judgment. — *Greene*. This passage clearly teaches the following great truths: (1) That there will be a final judgment. (2) That it will come with the final appearing of the Lord at the end of the world. (3) That it will consist not of a trial, but of a public announcement of the divine judgment founded upon the trial which life affords. (4) That it will be public. (5) That it will result in a public separation of all men into two distinct classes. (6) That this separation will be based, not on our creeds, our forms, our ceremonies, but on practical charity to our fellow-men. (7) That this is not inconsistent with the doctrine that they will be saved by faith, and not by works (works are the fruit of faith). (8) That the decisions will be final, unappealable, irreversible. — *Abbott*.

With 25-32-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

most sublime and momentous promise ever recorded in human consideration - arriving at the day when every man shall receive sentence - according to his deeds - it was within a few brief hours of his deepest humiliation - that these prophetic words were uttered -

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| <p>31. ¶ When¹ the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:</p> <p>32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate² them one from another, as a</p> | <p>shepherd divideth his sheep³ from the goats:</p> <p>33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.</p> <p>34. Then shall the King⁴ say unto them⁵ on his right hand, Come, ye</p> |
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¹ See chap. 16: 27. ² Chap. 13: 49. ³ Ezek. 34: 17. ⁴ Ver. 40. Rev. 17: 14; 19: 16. Comp. Isa. 6: 5.
⁵ 1 Kings 2: 19. Ps. 45: 9.

EXPLANATORY.

31. When the Son of man shall come. His final coming to judgment. In glory. As the great King and Judge of the universe; a great contrast with his then humiliation. Holy angels. Witnesses, guards, aids. Throne of his glory. The throne, manifesting his glory. — *Schaff*.

32. All nations. All the people who ever lived on the earth. — The Greek term for nations is most frequently used in the New Testament to signify the Gentiles in contradistinction to the Israelites, and is frequently rendered *Gentiles* (Acts 4: 27), and sometimes *heathen* (Acts 4: 25). But it is sometimes used distinctively of the Jews (Luke 7: 5. John 11: 48, 50. Acts 10: 22), and sometimes includes them with the Gentiles (Matt. 28: 19. Luke 24: 47), and it is therefore certainly capable of the meaning which our English version here gives to it. — *Abbott*. He shall separate them. See Ezek. 34: 17. Observe, the separation is not into a great variety of grades, which merge into one another: it is into two well-defined classes. This description cannot be reconciled with the conception that the other world will be one simply of development, into which all men will enter at the stage of progress reached here, to pass by a process of education into the next higher class. There are but two classes, though there may be grades of character and condition in both. Observe, too, that there is a real separation between the righteous and the wicked on earth; but it is not made apparent till the judgment day. Then the gulf between them is fixed forever (Matt. 13: 37. Luke 16: 26). — *Abbott*. As a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. The flocks of sheep and goats fed together in the same field. The goats were of a finer breed than I had before seen, and the sheep had long, coarse, hairy wool; so that, in casting your eye over the field, you could hardly say at the first glance, which were goats, and which were sheep. The shepherd at evening brought the flock home, and separated them into two parts, putting the sheep by themselves, and the goats by themselves. The words of the Saviour never came home to my mind with greater force than after witnessing this arrangement. — *Clarke's Glimpses of the Old World*. Divideth. Elsewhere the shepherd's work is the symbol of protective, self-sacrificing love, and, as such, our Lord had emphatically claimed for himself the title of the Good Shepherd (John 10: 14). Here we are reminded that even the shepherd has at times to execute the sentence of judgment which involves separation. — *Ellicott*. Sheep from the goats. Christ was himself also the shepherd of the goats, the shepherd of all mankind: hence he knows how to distinguish them perfectly. — *Lange*. The lambs, gentle, tractable, from the he-goats, proverbially wild, intractable, of less value. — *Schaff*.

33. The sheep on his right hand (the side of honor) . . . the goats on the left (the side of dishonor). Their deeds are tried by the fundamental law of the kingdom, the law of love, of which the King himself in the days of his humiliation had been an exemplar. Those who have obeyed that law are received to the place of favor on his right hand, and admitted to the honors and felicities of his kingdom; while those that have failed in that obedience are banished from his presence to the prison prepared for the King's enemies, there to be punished forever. — *Israel P. Warren, D.D., Parousia*.

34. Then shall the King say unto them. Christ himself. From this point there is no figure. It is the only time that our Lord thus calls himself, though he acknowledges the title before Pilate (chap. 27: 11). — *Schaff*. It is the King, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who speaks. Before the assembled universe shall Jesus of Nazareth be enthroned. He who on earth veiled his glory, took no higher title than the Son of man, was content to stand before an earthly judgment-seat and be doomed to die, shall come with power and great glory. He shall come, as we are told in one place, in his own glory; as we are told in another, in the glory of the Father. With all the essential glory which he had with the Father before the world was, with all the additional glory of his triumph over death and

division -

King of Christ will be the true King of the universe

will stand before the Father

blessed of my Father, inherit¹ the kingdom² prepared³ for you from the foundation of the world.⁴

35. For I was an hungred,⁵ and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger,⁶ and ye took me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison,⁷ and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40. And the King shall answer and

¹ 1 Pet. 3: 9. Rev. 21: 7. ² Luke 12: 32. Jas. 2: 5. ³ Chap. 20: 25. Heb. 11: 16. ⁴ See chap. 13: 35. ⁵ Isa. 58: 7. Ezek. 18: 7, 16. ⁶ Job 31: 32. Rom. 12: 13. ⁷ 2 Tim. 1: 16.

helt for us men and for our salvation, shall he be then visibly invested. — *J. Glentworth Butler*. Come. We come to Christ, both for salvation here and for glory hereafter. We come that we may be with him where he is (John 14: 3; 17: 24). Ye blessed of my Father. Not, ye that are to be blessed, but, ye that *have been* blessed: the perfect participle is used. They are blessed because all the fruits of true love which men *apparently* produce are *really* fruits of the Spirit (1 Cor. 3: 6. 1 John 4: 7, 12). — *Abbott*. Inherit the kingdom. This kingdom is to come to you by inheritance. It is not one that you are to acquire in virtue of any sacrifices made, any labors undergone, any victories achieved. You must first become children of God, by faith that is in Jesus Christ; and, being children, then shall ye be heirs, — heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. — *Hanna*. Prepared for you from the foundation of the world; i.e., so prepared in the councils of divine love; not actually made ready, for Christ went that he might prepare a place for us. — *Abbott*. The kingdom of glory is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14: 2, 3. Heb. 11: 10, 16); and it was God's eternal purpose that all should *inherit* it, who, by faith in Christ and conformity to his spirit and will, become its *worthy heirs* (Rom. 8: 9, 14-18. Gal. 4: 6, 7). — *Binney*.

35. I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. The acts of love here named are not such as require merely an outlay of money, but such as involve also the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, comfort, &c. — *Heubner*. Stranger. A foreigner or traveller. In the East such an one was dependent upon private hospitality.

36. Naked. Or, poorly clothed. Sick . . . in prison. Healing and release are not mentioned: these could be rendered by a few only; but visitation, sympathy, care, which all can give. — *Schaff*. No reference is made to spiritual help. The case is one in which the less includes the greater, as the promise of reward to one who gives a cup of cold water includes a promise for all larger service. Even the lowest forms of philanthropy, if they are the offspring of true love, have their reward. He that does these things has the spirit and follows the example of Christ. — *Abbott*. The few acts of kindness here named (vers. 35, 36) are but specimens of all those good deeds which presuppose their faith in Christ, which purifies the heart and works by love. Hence called *pure religion* (Jas. 1: 27), for, void of this faith and love, whatever we do profiteth us nothing (1 Cor. 13: 3. Heb. 4: 2; 12: 14). — *Binney*. Much more are those ministering to Christ, who carry the bread of life to the heathen, and bring freedom to those bound in the prison-house of sin, and who are sick with absence from hope and God. —

37-39. Then shall the righteous answer him. The commendation bestowed upon the righteous seems to proceed upon the ground of the good works they had done. Did our Lord, then, teach or imply a doctrine of salvation by works, or of merit? The very statement contradicts that supposition; for they who do such works have no thought of merit in them; they are astonished and overwhelmed at the enumeration: "Lord, when saw we thee?" What they did was not in the endeavor to merit heaven, but was the acting out of a true love to Christ in dependence upon him. — *Butler*. If they had done them *for* the reward, they would have *deserved* no reward. — *P*. They are amazed at the assurance that Christ considered what they had done to others as done to himself, though he had before so told them (18: 5). They also express a felt unworthiness of reward for any service done (Luke 17: 10). — *Binney*. True goodness is so easy and natural and habitual, that its acts are done without impressing the memory. Good men are far better than they remember. The best virtue *cannot* be proud and self-conscious: it is like the song of a bird, or the beating of our hearts. Only the *sick* man notices his pulse, and remembers each breath he draws. — *P*.

MATT. 25 : 31-46.

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee

an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister¹ unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inas-

much as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:² but the righteous into life³ eternal.

¹ Chap. 8: 15; 27: 55. Luke 8: 3. ² Dan. 12: 2. John 5: 29. ³ Rom. 2: 7; 6: 23.

44. When saw we thee an hungred? They were unconscious that their inhumanity was also impiety. They would have shown honor to the King if they had recognized him; but he measures their character by their treatment of his subjects. — *Abbott*. Sin is as unconscious of its enormity, as goodness is of its extent. Both are chiefly but seeds in this world; and but few here realize what great trees, what numberless fruits, what strange development, is to grow from them. — *P*.

45. Inasmuch as ye did it not. The poorest hope of heaven is that which is based on the words, "I have done no harm." The very stones, insects, reptiles, may say as much as that. There are two ways of measuring sin, — *down* and *up*: *down*, by counting all the actual sins we have done, — all covetings, anger, evil thoughts, selfishness, falsehoods, dishonesties; *up*, by seeing what we might have been, all the good deeds we might have done, the character we might have formed, the blessed, useful life we might have lived, and God intended us to live, and then placing beside this picture the life we have actually lived; this will show the number of our sins of omission. But probably we have omitted more of *quality* from our life than mere *quantity*. It is not more definite acts that we have left out, than the perfectness, the beauty, the spirituality, from the deeds we have done. — *P*.

46. These . . . into everlasting punishment . . . life eternal. "Life everlasting." The word in both clauses, being in the original the same, should have been the same in the translation also. Thus the decisions of this awful day will be final, irreversible, unending. — *J. F. and B.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

An excellent illustration of ver. 40 is Leigh Hunt's poem, "Abou Ben Adhem;" of vers. 42-45 is Hood's poem, "The Lady's Dream;" of ver. 33 (and, indeed, of the judgment), is part of Lowell's poem, "The Present Crisis." On the judgment see Sears's "Foregleams," p. 101; Warren's "Parousia;" Greene's "Glimpses of the Coming," p. 115; Whately's "Future State," p. 161. On ver. 46, see Bartlett against "Universalism," Dexter on "The Reasonableness of Future Punishment," and many others.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Doing for Christ in the persons of his poor. — Macaulay in his essay on Milton (p. 43) says, "Ariosto tells a story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul, poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were forever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterward revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love, and victorious in war." So what is done to Christ in his disguised and lowly form, of the poor and sick of earth, is a test of our character and of our love, and will be rewarded and blessed by him when he comes in his glory. — *P*.

II. Unconsciousness of virtue. — Vers. 37-39. True virtue never publishes itself: it does not even know itself. Its transpirations are so free and smooth and deep as to escape the ear of consciousness. Hence people are generally aware of their virtue in proportion as they have it *not*. We are apt to estimate the merit of our good deeds according to the struggle we make in doing them; whereas, the greater our virtue, the less we shall have to struggle in order to do them, and it is purely the weakness and imperfection of our virtue that makes it so hard to do well. Accordingly we find that he who does no duty without being goaded up to it is conscious of much more virtue than he has; while he who does every duty as a thing of course, and a matter of delight, is *unconscious of his virtue*, simply because he has so much of it. — *Hudson's Lectures on Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 103.

PRACTICAL.

1. A day of judgment is certainly coming for all.
2. Ver. 32. There will be a separation into two classes, each going to its own place.
3. This separation will not be arbitrary, but according to character and fitness.
4. Ver. 34. Heaven has been long prepared for the good.
5. Vers. 35, 36. The character and the faith are measured by the works they produce.
6. We serve God by helping man.
7. It is a great privilege to show our love to our Saviour, by showing it to his poor.
8. Vers. 37-39. The highest virtue is unconscious of its own greatness. "The man that is not greater than he knows is a very small affair."
9. Ver. 41. Those who do the deeds of Satan must go to the place prepared for Satan.
10. Vers. 42, 43. The wicked are condemned not only for the evil they did, but for the good they omitted to do.
11. The wicked usually imagine themselves better than they are.
12. Ver. 44. The heart is tested by what we do to Christ in his humiliation, not by what we would do for him in his glory.
13. Our future life is determined by what we do on earth.
14. The separation is final and eternal.

LESSON IX. — MAY 30, 1880.

GETHSEMANE. — MATT. 26 : 36-50.

TIME. — Thursday evening (from nearly midnight till near morning), April 5, A.D. 30. Soon after the institution of the Lord's Supper. Two days after the last lesson.

PLACE. — Gethsemane, a garden on the western slope of Mount Olivet.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (17th year). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (5th); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (34th).

CONNECTION.

After Jesus had spoken the words of the last lesson Tuesday afternoon, he went on to Bethany, where he remained over Wednesday. On Thursday he sends two of his disciples to Jerusalem to make ready the passover, and toward evening he himself with the rest of the disciples returns to the city. On Thursday evening they eat the passover, and he institutes the Lord's Supper. There he speaks the words recorded in John, chaps. 14-16, offers the prayer, John 17, and then retires from the city late in the evening to the Mount of Olives and the garden of Gethsemane.

| | |
|---|--|
| 36. ¶ ¹ Then cometh Jesus with them ² unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, | Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. |
|---|--|

37. And he took with him Peter³

¹ Mark 14: 32-42. ² Luke 22: 39. John 18: 1. ³ Chap. 17: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

36. Then cometh Jesus. From the Lord's Supper in the city, across the brook Kedron, that flows between Jerusalem and Olivet. A place called Gethsemane. The word means "oil-press," and was obviously connected with the culture of the olive-trees from which the mount took its name. St. John's description implies that it was but a little way beyond the brook Kedron (18 : 1), on the lower western slope of the mount. There was a garden (or rather, *orchard*) there, which was the wonted resort of our Lord and the disciples when they sought retirement. The olive-trees now growing in the place shown as Gethsemane, venerable as their age is, can hardly have been those that then grew there, as Josephus expressly records that Titus ordered all the trees in the neighborhood of Jerusalem to be cut down, and the Tenth Legion was actually encamped on the Mount of Olives (*Josephus*, "Wars," vol. ii., sect. 3). — *Ellicott*. There is a strong probability, too, that this was that "certain place" mentioned by Luke (11 : 1), where Jesus taught them

SECOND QUARTER.

39. And he⁴ went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed,⁵ saying, O my Father,⁶ if it be possible,

But has been reunited and all that super-
naturalistic which baffles our comprehension —
is fathomed down, as it is, by our sin
Dec. 28 - 6 -

41. Watch and pray,¹ that ye enter² not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will³ be done.

43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes⁴ were heavy.

44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45. Then cometh he to his disciples,

¹ Luke 22: 40, 46. ² Comp. chap. 6: 13. ³ See ver. 39. Comp. chap. 6: 10. ⁴ Luke 9: 32.

deeper sympathy with Christ in his trial would have kept them awake. — *P.* There is another symptom of grief, which is not often noticed, and that is *profound sleep*. I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals, we are told by Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. The son of Gen. Custine slept nine hours the night before he was led to the guillotine in Paris. — *Dr. Rush's Diseases of the Mind*, p. 319. Saith unto Peter. Because he had been foremost in promising and boasting how faithful he would be (vers. 33, 34). **Watch one hour.** This may be fairly taken as partly measuring the time that had passed since their Master had left them. — *Ellicott*. Be sure it is something more than surface-feeling — something more than impulse; it is good, honest, sober, considerate, patient *principle*, stayed up by prayer, that alone can *remain* awake, and outwatch the stars, and wait through the darkness, and conquer temptation, and do it all for the honor of the suffering and bleeding Master. — *F. D. Huntington*.

41. **Watch and pray.** The sentinel, picketed to watch the enemy, does his duty by giving the alarm if the enemy approaches, not by advancing single-handed to the conflict. So the duty of a Christian, watchfully discerning the approach of temptation, is to convey the case to God; it is foolhardiness to adventure into the combat, unsent and unprovided for. — *William Ives Buddington*. *Watch* is a word of habit, having respect to the immediate trial which was to try them, and also to the general duty of all disciples in all time. — *Alford*. **Enter not into temptation.** Entering into temptation is another and a very different thing from being assailed by temptation. — *J. G. Butler*. He that enters of his own accord into temptation is already more than half overcome by it. — *P.* We cannot be too careful to keep out of the reach of sin; not to stand in the way of sinners; not to breathe pestilential air. If prevention is better than cure, precaution is better than power. Therefore ought a good man ever to watch and pray that he *enter not into temptation*. — *Outhrie*. What we are taught to seek or shun in prayer, we should equally pursue or avoid in action. Very earnestly, therefore, should we avoid temptation, seeking to walk so guardedly in the path of obedience that we may never tempt the Devil to tempt us. — *Spurgeon*. The spirit *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. Christ finds an extenuation for their unkindness, when they themselves could not. As if he had said, I know your hearts, and am satisfied of your affection; and therefore accept your will, and compassionate your weakness. So benign, so gracious, is the friendship of Christ; so answerable to our wants, so suitable to our frailties. — *R. South*. At this moment Christ was giving as high and pre-eminent an example of this truth, as the disciples were affording a low and ignoble one. — *Alford*. Observe in this contrast the lesson for us. In both Christ and the disciples there is a willing spirit, in both weakness of the flesh. But in Christ the spirit conquers the flesh, and he is victor: in the disciples the flesh conquers the spirit, and they are defeated. — *Abbott*.

42. **He went away again the second time, and prayed.** "More earnestly," says Luke, who adds the account of the bloody sweat (Luke 22: 44). Observe the change in the prayer, which Mark and Luke do not indicate. The continuance of the trial he accepts as God's answer to the petition, "Let this cup pass from me:" he now asks only, "Thy will be done." The wish to be relieved from the passion is subdued: the will to fulfil the Father's will is supreme. At what time the angel appeared to him, strengthening him, as described in Luke 22: 44, is uncertain. I should agree with *Alford* in placing it after the first prayer, and considering the change in the form of petition, which Matthew alone notes, as due to that gracious interposition. His prayer was heard and answered, as was Paul's (2 Cor. 12: 8-10). — *Abbott*.

44. The same words. *Viz.*, as the last, ver. 42. — *Alford*.

45. **Sleep on now.** The opportunity for helping your Master by praying and watching with him is gone. He has fought and won the battle. It is needless to watch longer. The hour is at hand. The time is near of the final scenes.

...the disciples were witnesses to the words - ... had done - ... a kiss and made the incident a fitting opportunity as well as affection - ... pretended that he did not belong to the procession of enemies -

MAT. 26: 36-50. LESSON IX.

he did not belong to the procession of enemies -

and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour¹ is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47. ¶ And ²while he yet spake, lo, Judas,³ one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. *Kissed him tenderly in the hall*

50. And Jesus said unto him, Friend,⁴ wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

¹ John 12: 27; 13: 1. ² Mark 14: 43-50. Luke 22: 47-53. John 18: 3-11. ³ See ver. 14. ⁴ See chap. 20: 13.

46. Rise, let us be going. The sudden change is, perhaps, best explained by the supposition that it was not till after the words "sleep on now," had been spoken that the traitor and his companions were seen actually approaching, and that it was this that led to the words seemingly so different in their purport, bidding the slumberers to rouse themselves from sleep. A new crisis had come, calling for action. It is obvious that the latter clause does not involve any suggestion of flight, but rather a call to confront the danger. — *Ellicott.*

47. Judas. Called Iscariot, the son of Simon. The natural business man of the apostles, who might have made himself very useful. But he was selfish and covetous. He was the treasurer of the apostles, and stole their funds. He grew worse even under the training and example of Jesus, till at last, for 30 pieces of silver, or shekels, worth about 50 cents each, he betrayed his Master. No doubt he excused himself by trying to think that Jesus had power to defend himself, and so no great harm could come from his crime. — *P.* With him a great multitude. Composed of a detachment of the Roman cohort stationed in the castle Antonia (John 18: 3, 12, "the band"), of the Jewish temple-watch (Luke 22: 52, "the captains of the temple"); of others, including servants and dependents of the high priest (ver. 51), and, in all probability, some fanatical chief priests and elders also. (Luke 22: 52), who wished to witness the capture. — *Schaff.* With swords. The Roman soldiers had these. Staves. Or clubs, the arms of the temple-watch and the crowd. John adds also, what lay in the nature of the case, that they were provided with "lanterns and torches" as well as weapons. It was now near the hour of dawn, but they must have left the city while there was at best only moonlight to guide them. They bent their steps to Gethsemane, as that was known to Judas as one at least of our Lord's chosen resorts (John 18: 2), in which, we may well believe, he had spent some hours of each of the four preceding nights. — *Ellicott.* From the chief priests and elders of the people. The national authorities, at whose wish the Roman authorities acted. — *Schaff.*



SHEKEL.

48. Whomsoever I shall kiss. It is probable, from the known customs (1) of the Jews and (2) of the early Christians (Rom. 16: 16. 1 Thess. 5: 26), that this was the usual salutation of the disciples to their Master. — *Ellicott.*

49. Kissed him. A stronger word than that used in the last verse. "The sign was the simple kissing; but the performance was more emphatic, a caressing, corresponding with the purpose of Judas to make sure, and with the excitement of his feelings." — *Meyer.*

50. John adds some particulars which are omitted by the other Evangelists. The natural order of arranging these particulars seems to be first the traitor's kiss and the reproachful reply of the Lord (Luke 22: 48), then the narrative of John 18: 4-8, the beginning of which may perhaps be identified with ver. 50 of the present chapter, and then the seizure of the Lord by the armed company. — *Cook.* Friend. (Compare chap. 20: 13.) A term of civility, though not necessarily of friendship. Our Lord did not turn away in holy indignation, from this Judas kiss. His meekness and gentleness under the greatest provocation, surpass even the standard which he holds up for his disciples (Matt. 5: 39). — *Schaff.*

50 - Friend, ... kindness and gentleness ...

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On ver. 39, Winslow's *Sympathy of Christ*; F. W. Robertson's *Sermons*, Series 5, "On Prayer;" Dwight's *Theology*, "Resignation;" F. W. Farrar's *Silence and Voices*, "Prayer the Antidote to Sorrow." On ver. 41, "watching and prayer," Sprague's *Lectures to Youth*; H. W. Beecher, Series 7, "Physical Hinderances to Spiritual Life;" *Sermons* by South and Jeremy Taylor.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **Gethsemane.** — Dr. Wordsworth sees a providential and prophetic adaptation of the names of Scripture localities. *Gethsemane*, the oil-press in which the olives were crushed and bruised, and Christ was bruised for our sins, that oil might flow from his wounds to heal our souls. *Bethlehem*, the house of bread, where the "Bread of life" was born. *Nazareth*, branch, where he grew up as a branch. *Bethsaida*, the house of fishing, where he called his apostles, who were fishers of men. *Capernaum*, the house of consolation, where he dwelt. *Bethany*, the place of palm-dates, which speaks of the palm and hosannas of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The *Mount of Olives*, whence Christ ascended to heaven, to hold forth the olive-branch of peace. — *Philip Schaff, in Lange.*

II. **Not my will, but thine.** — An ignorant man, just become a Christian, knew not how to pray. But he took the letters of the alphabet, and laid them before the Lord, saying, "Lord, I know not what I need or ought to pray for: take thou these letters, and spell out the prayer I ought to offer, and answer that." No man knows enough to insist on his own wishes, rather than to trust all to the wisdom and love of God.

III. The Judas legend.

His eye no more looked onward, but its gaze
Rests where Remorse a life misspent surveys.
By the dark shape of what he is, serene
Stands the bright ghost of what he might have been;
Here the vast loss, and there the worthless gain,
Vice scorned yet wooed, and virtue loved in vain. — *Bulwer.*

IV. **The failure of Judas' life.** — At Baalbec, in a quarry, lies a magnificent column, the largest worked stone in the world, almost detached and ready for transportation. And in the ruined Temple of the Sun, near by, is a niche still waiting for it, after 40 centuries. So large, so grand, it is a failure, because it never filled the place for which it was quarried and hewn. Like failures are many human lives. Who can tell how many men lie among the waste and ruins of life, whom God designed to fill grand places, but who, when called, refused to go? They folded their talents away, and buried them; and forever they will lie in the quarries, pale ghosts of glorious "might-have-beens," while the niches in God's temple which they were meant to fill remain forever vacant. — *J. R. Miller in Sunday-school Times.*

V. **The garden.** — That the Son of man should have his house in a garden, — that he should be forced to rest and sleep and pray on the hillside, — must seem to many strange. But those familiar with Eastern life will easily understand it. During a great part of the year nearly all the inhabitants sleep in the open air, on the house-top or in garden or field. There is no rain, and no dew; the ground is dry, and the air fresh and balmy. Moreover, in the East one can have no privacy in a house, night or day. The one apartment is open to all comers. — *J. L. Porter.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 36. Every life has its Gethsemanes of sorrow, and may have also its victory.
2. The greatest battles, the true Waterloos and Marathons of life, are fought on the silent battle-field of the heart.
3. Prayer, communion with God, is the comfort of the sorrowing.
4. Sorrow loves retirement from the crowd, and sympathy with friends.
5. Ver. 39. The very essence of faith is in, "Not my will, but thine, be done."
6. No one is wise enough, or knows enough, to insist on having his own will.
7. God's will is always infinitely better for us than our own.
8. Prayer is best answered by giving the things God sees best, and which at last we will see were the things we really desired.
9. Ver. 41. There are often physical and mental hinderances to expressing our love and religion.
10. The best people are most ready to excuse the failures of others.
11. Praying and watching must go together: each loses power by being alone.
12. Ver. 49. Jesus is often betrayed by his professed friends.

LESSON X. — JUNE 6, 1880.

THE CRUCIFIXION. — MATT. 27 : 35-50.

TIME. — Friday, April 6, A.D. 30 ; from nine o'clock A.M., to three o'clock P.M.

PLACE. — Calvary, just without the gate of Jerusalem ; called Golgotha, the place of a skull.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Roman Empire. Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa ; Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, — both subject to Rome.

CONNECTION.

The events after the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane, which was the subject of our last lesson, took place in the following order (*Robinson's Harmony*) : —

(1) That same night he is brought before Caiaphas, in Jerusalem, and Peter denies him (Matt. 26 : 57, 69-75).

(2) Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrim, and mocked (Luke 22 : 63-71. Matt. 26 : 59-68).

(3) The Sanhedrim lead him to Pilate early Friday morning (Matt. 27 : 1, 2, 11-14. Luke 23 : 1-5).

(4) Jesus is sent by Pilate to Herod, in another part of Jerusalem (Luke 23 : 6-12).

(5) Pilate seeks to release Jesus (Luke 23 : 13-25. Matt. 27 : 15-26).

(6) Pilate delivers up Jesus. He is scourged and mocked. Jerusalem. (Matt. 27 : 26-30).

(7) Judas repents, and hangs himself (Matt. 27 : 3-10).

(8) Jesus is led away to be crucified, from Jerusalem to Calvary (Matt. 27 : 31-34).

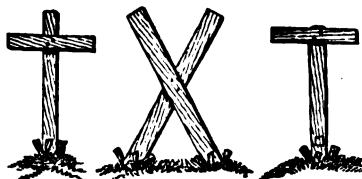
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| <p>35. And they crucified him, and parted¹ his garments, casting lots : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken</p> | <p>by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.</p> |
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¹ Luke 23 : 34. John 19 : 23, 24.

EXPLANATORY.

35. And they crucified him. The three crosses were laid on the ground ; that of Jesus, which was doubtless taller than the other two, being placed, in bitter scorn, in the midst. Perhaps the cross-beam was now nailed to the upright ; and certainly the title, which had either been borne by Jesus, fastened round his neck, or carried by one of the soldiers in front of him, was now nailed to the summit of his cross. Then he was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh.

Whether the sufferer was *also* bound to the cross, we do not know ; but, to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not "rest upon nothing but four great wounds," there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. It was probably at this moment of inconceivable horror that the voice of the Son of man was heard calmly praying in divine compassion for his brutal and pitiless murderers, — ay, and for all who in their sinful ignorance crucify him afresh forever, — "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." And then the accursed tree — with its living human burden hanging upon it in helpless agony, and suffering fresh



CROSSES.

The first, or Latin cross, was the kind on which Jesus was crucified.

36. And sitting down they watched¹ him there ; accusation² written, THIS³ IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
37. And set up over his head his 38. 'Then were there two thieves

¹ Ver. 54. ² Acts 25: 18, 27. ³ Comp. Luke 23: 18. John 19: 19. ⁴ Luke 23: 32, 33. John 19: 18.

tortures as every movement irritated the fresh rents in hands and feet — was slowly heaved up by strong arms, and the end of it fixed firmly in a hole dug deep in the ground for that purpose. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike, in close proximity to every gesture of insult and hatred. A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death *can* have of the horrible and ghastly, — dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds, — all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. — *Farrar's Life of Christ.* Parted his garments, casting lots. The execution was carried out, and the cross watched, by a guard of four soldiers, with a centurion; and the garments of the sufferers were their perquisite. Four parts being made, there remained the upper robe, woven throughout with a seam, the type of Christ's perfect righteousness, and the source of healing to many who had touched it. As it would have been spoiled by dividing it, the soldiers decided to cast lots for it, thus fulfilling another prophecy: "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots" (Ps. 22: 18). This has given occasion to the remark that Christians have, in their party divisions, paid less respect to their Master than the heathen soldiers did. — *Smith.* That it might be fulfilled. This clause is omitted in all the best manuscripts.

36. They (there were four soldiers) watched him there. This was usual to prevent the condemned from being taken down. "In this case they had a peaceful bivouac, which assumed a significant meaning." — *Schaff.*

37. And they set up over his head. Not necessarily the soldiers. It was customary for the person to be crucified to carry "a title," suspended from his neck, to the place of execution. Pilate had written this title, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and it was undoubtedly intended mainly to mock the Jews (see John 19: 19-22). His accusation, put in a form which conveyed a sneer against his accusers. Thus he died, with his proper title over his head. — *Schaff.* This is Jesus, the king of the Jews. All careful readers of the Bible must have observed that the superscription placed over our Lord's head on the cross is variously given by the Gospel-writers. Each one reports it in a manner slightly different from the other three. This apparent discrepancy has given rise to various explanations. In order to solve the difficulty, we must remember that the superscription was written in three different languages. Greek was the language best known in the world at that time when our Lord was crucified; and there was a Greek superscription, for the benefit of strangers from foreign parts. Latin was the language of the Romans; and there was a Latin superscription, because the sentence on our Lord was passed by a Latin judge, and executed by Latin soldiers. Hebrew was the language of the Jews; and there was a superscription in the Hebrew tongue, because Jesus was crucified as a Jew, that all Jews might see it. But, for any thing we know, the superscription in each language may have slightly varied from the superscription in other languages. Matthew may have recorded it as it was in Hebrew; Mark, as it was in Latin; Luke, as it was in Greek. — *Ryle.* King of the Jews. Such was the honorable nature of the title, saith Bucer, that in the midst of death Christ began to triumph by it. The cross began to change its own nature; and, instead of an engine of torture, it became a throne of majesty. — *Flavel.*

38. Two thieves crucified with him. Those whom the Romans called "robbers" were oftentimes wild and stormy zealots, maintaining in arms a hopeless protest against that yoke which God had imposed on his people for their sins. — *Dr. Butler.* There is every likelihood that the two malefactors crucified with Jesus belonged to the band of Barabbas. For good or for evil they knew something about the Christ: the taunt uttered by the one expresses this, no less than the prayer of the other. — *Trench.* On the right hand, . . .

JUNE 6.

LESSON X.

MATT. 27: 35-50.

crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39. ¶ And they¹ that passed by reviled² him, wagging³ their heads,

40. And saying, Thou that destroyest⁴ the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If⁵ thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41. Likewise⁶ also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42. He saved others; himself he cannot save. If⁷ he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43. He trusted⁸ in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44. The thieves⁹ also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45. Now from the sixth¹⁰ hour there

¹ Ps. 22: 7; 109: 25. ² Luke 22: 55; 23: 39. ³ Job 16: 4. ⁴ Chap. 26: 61. ⁵ Chap. 26: 63. ⁶ Luke 23: 35. ⁷ John 1: 49; 12: 13. ⁸ Ps. 22: 8. ⁹ Luke 23: 39. ¹⁰ Luke 23: 44.

on the left. The three crosses which stood together on Mount Calvary are a continual emblem of our world. A dying Saviour had on one side of him an enemy and unbeliever, and on the other side a friend and believer. — *Nehemiah Adams*.

39. They that passed by. People walking about, probably coming that way, for the purpose of seeing the execution. The morbid taste for horrors no doubt existed then, and popular hatred was aroused. Besides, the dignitaries were there! (ver. 41.) — *Schaff*. Reviled. Literally, "blasphemed." To revile is to treat as vile, to reproach with contemptuous language. Wagging their heads (comp. Ps. 22: 7), in malignant triumph mingled with contempt.

40. Thou that destroyest the temple . . . save thyself. The reference is to John 2: 19; and the language here and in vers. 62, 63, indicates that their misrepresentation of his language upon his trial (chap. 26: 61) was wilful. — *Abbott*. If thou be the Son of God. The coming down from the cross would seem to them the true test of his being the Messiah. If he was unable to deliver himself, how could he deliver others? If he can be crucified by men, how can he be great enough to be the Saviour of men? Their argument seems invincible, till we see that he could not be the Christ and Saviour unless he had been crucified.

41. Chief priests, &c. All members of the Sanhedrim. Elders. Heads of families.

42. He saved others. The mockers, as before (comp. John 11: 50, 51), bear unconscious witness to the truth. They referred, it may be, to the works of healing and the raising of the dead which had been wrought in Galilee and Jerusalem; but their words were true in a yet higher sense. He had come into the world to save others, regardless of himself. — *Ellicott*. Himself he cannot save. If he had saved himself he could not have saved others. If he be the king. The language is that of taunt, and refers to the inscription upon the cross; and its object was, perhaps, in part to turn the edge of its sarcasm against the nation. — *Abbott*. And we will believe him. If he had done so it would have made no difference in their belief, for they resisted the greater miracle of his resurrection (chap. 28: 14, 15). — *Abbott*. The real difficulty was, as in many cases of unbelief, not with the want of proof, but in their own bad hearts and lives. Of them, as of others, it is still true, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." — *P*. For this very reason we believe, because Christ did not come down from the cross. — *Bengel*.

43. He trusted in God. A striking illustration of the false idea of special Providence. Many still think that he who seems to be deserted by God cannot be a son in whom he is well pleased, and that God may always be expected to interfere immediately to save his children from unjust suffering. Observe, by comparison with Ps. 22, written by David at least a thousand years before this time, a singular testimony to the inspiration of prophecy.

44. The thieves also. Only one thief really said this, and Matthew speaks in general terms. This is often done where the predicate relates strictly to one subject, while yet the writer expresses the idea generally. — *Robinson*. Or both at first may have reviled, and then one have ceased. — Here comes in the incident of the penitent thief (Luke 23: 39-43). And here also Jesus commits his mother to the care of John (John 19: 25-27).

45. The sixth hour. Twelve o'clock, noon. Darkness over all the land. It could

was darkness over all the land unto the ninth¹ hour.

46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli,² Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47. Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This man calleth for Elias.

48. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with³ vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave⁴ him to drink.

49. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50. Jesus,⁵ when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

¹ Acts 3: 1. Comp. 1 Kings 18: 29. ² Ps. 22: 1. ³ Luke 23: 36. John 19: 29, 30. ⁴ Ps. 69: 21. ⁵ Luke 23: 46. John 19: 30.

have been no darkness of any natural eclipse, for the paschal moon was at the full; but it was one of those "signs from heaven" for which, during the ministry of Jesus, the Pharisees had so often clamored in vain. The early fathers appealed to Pagan authorities—the historian Phallus, the chronicler Phlegon—for such a darkness; but we have no means of testing the accuracy of these references, and it is quite possible that the darkness was a local gloom, which hung densely over the guilty city and its immediate neighborhood.—*Farrar*. *Alford* thinks it refers to the whole earth; one half of which was naturally dark, it being night, the other half thus supernaturally darkened. Even Nature sympathized with Christ in his sufferings. As the darkness commenced at the sixth hour, the second of the Jewish hours of prayer, so it continued till the ninth hour, *the hour of the evening sacrifice*, increasing, probably, in depth, and *reaching its deepest gloom at the moment of this mysterious cry*, when the flame of the one great "evening sacrifice" was burning fiercest.—*David Brown*.

46. The ninth hour. Three o'clock in the afternoon. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani. Quoted from Ps. 22: 1. The first two words are Hebrew, the latter two Chaldaic. Mark's language, *Eloi*, is a Syro-Chaldaic form, having the same meaning.—*Abbott*. That is distinctively the Psalm of the suffering Messiah. It must have passed through his soul at that hour. The triumph and the glory are there too, just as distinct. So the Psalm (22: 27-31) advances from the wail of the sufferer to the triumphant shout of the Messianic Conqueror and King.—*Professor D. S. Gregory*. Why hast thou forsaken me? These words express the feeling, not the fact, and the feeling indicated by their obvious meaning. Bodily causes, inflammation, interruption of the flow of blood, dizziness, no doubt acted on his real human body and soul. But his soul was capable of unusual sufferings. The speedy death, while he could cry with a loud voice (ver. 50), points to a deeper struggle. This was an experience of sin and death in their inner connection and universal significance for the race, by One who was perfectly pure and holy; a mysterious and indescribable anguish of the *body* and the *soul* in immediate prospect of, and in actual wrestling with, death as the wages of sin and the culmination of all misery of man. But his spirit still holds fast to God, and thus our hold on God is established.—*Schaff*.

47. This man calleth for Elias. Partly a misunderstanding, "Eli" for "Elias," and partly a mockery. *Elias* is the Greek form of *Elijah*.

48. One of them. The soldiers or bystanders. Because, as recorded in John, Jesus said, "I thirst." Vinegar. The *posca*, or common drink of the Roman soldiers, viz., cheap acid wine mingled with water.—*Robinson*. A reed. In John, "upon hyssop;" then probably a stalk or stem of hyssop is to be understood.—*Robinson*.

49. The rest said. The others in mockery call upon this one to desist, and see if Elias will come to save him.—*Alford*.

50. Cried again with a loud voice. The last words were those recorded in Luke 23: 46: "Father, into thy hands," &c., immediately preceded by the triumphant cry, "It is finished" (John 19: 30). The order of the Seven Words (as they are called) is: Before the darkness, (1) the prayer of Christ for his enemies; (2) the promise to the penitent robber; (3) the charge to Mary and John. At the close of the darkness, (4) the cry of distress to his God. Just before his death, (5) the exclamation, "I thirst;" (6) "It is finished;" (7) the final commendation of his spirit to God.—*Schaff*. Yielded up the ghost. Actually died. "Ghost" is the old word for spirit,—his soul.

unless we repent, believe, and accept Him
as our all-sufficient Saviour —

JUNE 13.

LESSON XI.

MATT. 28 : 8-20.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Stroud's *Physical Cause of Christ's Death*; Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 398-424; Geikie's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 555-574; Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures*, "Orthodoxy," p. 133; poem by James T. Fields on "The Cross Guide-Board in the Alps," when they were lost in the storm; sermons in *The National Preacher*, Nos. 27 and 37, by Professor S. Harris and Dr. J. T. Duryea; also sermons by Sawin, Krummacher, Tholuck, and R. McCheyne.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Him who died for me. — It is related of Cyrus, when he had conquered Armenia, that he said to Tigranes, the king's son, "What would you do to save your wife from slavery?" He replied, "I would willingly lay down my life to save her from such a fate." Cyrus released and restored them. After he was gone, one praised the beauty of his person, another his clemency, another his valor; when Tigranes, turning to his wife, asked her what she thought of Cyrus. "Indeed," she said, "I did not observe him." — "What, then, were you looking at?" asked Tigranes in surprise. "At him who offered to lay down his life for me."

II. Careless and mocking in the presence of their Saviour. — My study-windows used to overlook a rocky point on the coast of Gloucester, Mass., where, some years ago, a vessel was wrecked in a terrible snow-storm. The villagers went to the sailors' help, and at last they succeeded in getting a rope from the wreck to the shore; and all came safely to land but one, who refused to come. A young man went aboard the wreck, and found this man benumbed and drunken, partly undressed, and about to get into his berth for sleep. He took him by the shoulders, forced him upon deck, and sent him ashore, and in ten minutes the wreck went to pieces. How many sinners are careless, asleep, and wishing to remain in sin, even in the presence of the Saviour!

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 35. God fulfils his word, even to the smallest particulars.
2. Ver. 36. Those that watch Christ find in him a King, a Redeemer, an Example.
3. Ver. 37. Many a name given in mockery becomes a glory, as "Methodist," "Puritan." Even the cross, then a disgrace, has become an emblem of the highest love and glory.
4. Ver. 40. The world are forever misinterpreting Christ and his Church, perverting their doctrines.
5. Ver. 42. He who seeks first to save himself is never able to save others.
6. People continually think that they would be better in other circumstances than their own; but, if they will not serve God where they are, probably they would nowhere.
7. Ver. 45. Light came when Christ was born, darkness when he died. How dark the world would be without Christ!
8. Ver. 46. The greatest of evils would be to be forsaken by God.
9. Even when Christ felt he was forsaken, he still clung to God.
10. Christ crucified is the greatest power for making men good. It shows (1) the exceeding evil of sin, (2) the greatness of our danger, (3) the value of salvation, (4) the wonderful love of God, (5) every motive for loving God, (6) a perfect example of duty.

LESSON XI. — JUNE 13, 1880.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION. — MATT. 28 : 8-20.

TIME. — Vers. 8-10 belong to Sunday morning, April 8, A.D. 30, the third day after the crucifixion. The ascension was 40 days after, Thursday, May 17. Vers. 16-20 belong a few days before the ascension.

PLACE. — The incidents of vers. 8-15 took place in the vicinity of Jerusalem; of vers. 16-20, on a mountain in Galilee. The ascension was from the vicinity of Bethany.

RULERS. — Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (17). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judæa (5); Herod Antipas, of Galilee (34); Herod Philip, of other parts (34).

Our Lord's Mission and Authority
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OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.—There are eleven recorded, — 1. To Mary Magdalene alone (Mark 16. John 22 : 14), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 8. 2. To the women returning from the sepulchre (Matt. 28 : 9, 10), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 8. 3. To Simon Peter alone (Luke 24 : 34), near Jerusalem, — Sunday, April 8. 4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke 24 : 13, &c.), — Sunday, April 8. 5. To the apostles at Jerusalem, excepting Thomas, who was absent (John 20 : 19), — Sunday, April 8. 6. To the apostles at Jerusalem a second time, when Thomas was present (John 20 : 26, 29), Sunday, April 15. 7. At the Sea of Tiberias, when seven disciples were fishing (John 21 : 1). 8. To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28 : 16). 9. To above 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15 : 6), in Galilee, near the time of the last. 10. To James only (1 Cor. 15 : 7). 11. To all the apostles on Mount Olivet at his ascension (Luke 24 : 51), Thursday, May 17. Those in our lesson to-day are Nos. 2 and 8.

CONNECTION.

The body of Jesus was deposited in the sepulchre a little before sunset on Friday. The resurrection was on the third day, — Sunday morning, April 8. So that Jesus was almost 36 hours in the tomb, — being two nights and one intervening day. The women who had come from Galilee had never lost sight of their Lord, from the time he was brought forth to be crucified until they noted the tomb in which he was laid. Knowing the haste in which the body had been deposited, it was their intention to come early in the morning after their sabbath, and dispose of the body in a more orderly manner for its final rest. They saw, on coming to the sepulchre, that the body of Jesus had disappeared. — *Kitto*. Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and other women, went with Mary Magdalene early Sunday morning to the sepulchre. "Women were last at the cross, and first at the tomb." There an angel met them, and told them Jesus had risen, and bade them go and tell the disciples that Jesus would go before them into Galilee. Mary Magdalene went to Peter and John, who were probably living in another part of the city from the other disciples; and, returning after them, she and the other women who had waited for a time went to the band of disciples, as recorded in to-day's lesson.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9. ¶ And as they went to tell his

Rejoice
 disciples, behold, Jesus met¹ them, saying, All hail. And they came and held² him by the feet, and worshipped³ him.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be

¹ Comp. Mark 16 : 9. John 20 : 14. ² 2 Kings 4 : 27. ³ Ver. 17. See chap. 8 : 2.

EXPLANATORY.

8. And they; i.e., the women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and others, who had come early to visit the tomb of Jesus. Departed. "Went out" of the sepulchre and to the city. With fear and great joy. A natural state of mingled feeling, in view of what they had seen and heard, — fear at what they had seen, joy at what they had heard, and both mingled because the latter seemed too good to be true. — *Schaff*. And did run, &c. Mary Magdalene ran eagerly to tell Peter and John, leaving the other Mary and Joanna (Luke 24 : 10), and then followed in the rear of the two disciples (John 20 : 2). Then, when they had left, the Lord showed himself first to her (John 20 : 14), and then to the others (Matt. 28 : 9), whom she had by that time joined; and then they all hastened together to tell the rest of the disciples. — *Ellicott*.

9. It is not impossible that Matthew here embodies, in a briefer and more imperfect form, the facts which John has told more fully and accurately. — *Abbott*. All hail. "Rejoice," the usual form of salutation. The English "all hail" is shortened from "all health." Held him by the feet. Clasped his feet. The action was very natural in such circumstances, and was allowed to strengthen the evidence of his resurrection (comp. on the other hand, John 20 : 17). In Mary's case this was not necessary. — *Schaff*. Worshipped him. The practice referred to still continues in the East. A Hindoo disciple, meeting his religious guide in the public street, prostrates himself before him, and rubs the dust from his feet. — *Biblical Treasury*.

10. Be not afraid. To these disciples the resurrection of their Lord was no cause for

not afraid: go tell my brethren,¹ that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. *2: 11*

11. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch² came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14. And if this come to the governor's³ ears, we will persuade⁴ him, and secure you. *and make you free*

15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported⁵ among the Jews until this day. *inspired*

16. ¶ Then the eleven disciples

¹ John 20 : 17. Comp. Ps. 22 : 22. Chap. 26 : 32. ² Chap. 27 : 65, 66. ³ Chap. 27 : 1. ⁴ Acts 12 : 20. ⁵ Chap. 9 : 31. Mark 1 : 45.

fear, but for rejoicing. So his final coming will be cause of terror to the unbelieving, but not to his own followers.—*Abbott*. My brethren. The first time that this word is applied to the disciples by our Lord. On the first appearance of the risen Saviour he gave his loved ones an assurance of the continuance and deepening of his feelings of affection towards them. Indeed, this expression has a peculiar if not exclusive propriety after the resurrection, when he became "the first-born from the dead."—*Cook*. Into Galilee. See appearance 7, 8, and 9, in the introduction to this lesson.

11. When they were going. While the women were hastening to announce the gospel of the resurrection to the disciples, the soldiers were going to report it to the Pharisees; the one to publish it for the world's redemption, the other to conceal and counteract it. Satan was as quick to silence the gospel as the disciples to proclaim it. Some of the watch. The guard set by Pilate at the request of the chief priests, to watch the sepulchre, lest the disciples should steal his body, and say he was risen (Matt. 27 : 62-66).

12. When they were assembled. An informal, not a formal, meeting of the Sanhedrim. Elders. Leading people, heads of families. Gave large money. Literally, sufficient, in the sense of abundant. They could think now only of lying and bribery. Yet what a gross absurdity was involved in this falsehood! *If the guards were asleep, how could they know of the body's being stolen away by the disciples?* Their very lack of fidelity, so confessed, would destroy their testimony.—*Jacobus*. Soldiers. Who had been set to guard the tomb.

13. His disciples . . . stole him . . . while we slept. A most clumsy and absurd fiction, equivalent to saying, "We soldiers dared to sleep when on duty, and thus expose ourselves to a disgraceful death (Acts 12 : 18, 19 ; 16 : 27), and when asleep we saw men steal the body of Jesus, and knew them to be his disciples." This surely answers to the description given of the Father of lies (John 8 : 44).—*Binney*.

14. Come to the governor's ears. Not merely, as our English version would indicate, "If he happens to hear about it," but, "If you are officially accused before him."—*Abbott*. We will persuade him. In plain words, "bribe him."—*Cook*.

15. This saying. This report of the soldiers; not the entire account here given. Until this day; i.e., when the Gospel was written, possibly 30 or 40 years after the resurrection. It was current among the Jews in the second and third centuries, and has been believed in later times.—*Schaff*. Justin Martyr (in the second century) mentions the report as current among the Jews of his time, the Jews having sent "chosen men" into all parts of the world to propagate it (*Dial. c. Tryph. c. 108*).—*Ellicott*. A singular and significant testimony to the truth of the resurrection is afforded by the change in the sabbath day. It was changed, not by any express command in the New Testament, but by the almost universal consent of the Church, which could not endure to observe as a day of joy and gladness that on which Christ lay in the tomb, nor forbear to mark as a weekly festival that on which he arose.—*Abbott*. Observe, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead must be admitted as the crowning proof of his claims, and the highest token of the acceptance of his work in heaven. It establishes our faith (John 20 : 8), and gives believers a pledge of their resurrection and redemption, since he is risen for us (1 Cor. 15 : 20-23). It shows that Christ died not as others, but for a specific purpose as covenanted with the Father. And at once upon the accomplishment of this great end of his death, he triumphantly rose again (Heb. 1 : 3).—*Jacobus*.

16. Then. This must have been at least eight days (John 20 : 26) after the resurrec-

*... the Father and upon earth was
given me - Go, make disciples of all the nations
in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, baptizing them
in the complete kingdom of the Father -*

Sadist went¹ away into Galilee, into a moun-
tain where Jesus had appointed them.

not labor 17. And when they saw him, they
worshipped him: but some doubted.

18. And Jesus came and spake

unto them, saying, All^a power is
given unto me in heaven and in
earth.

19. Go^a ye therefore, and teach^a
all nations,^b baptizing them *into*^c the

¹ See ver. 7. ^a Dan. 7: 13, 14. Acts 9: 36. Rom. 14: 9. Eph. 1: 20-22. Phil. 2: 9, 10. Col. 2: 10.
^b Mark 16: 15, 16. ^c Chap. 13: 52. ^d Luke 24: 47. ^e Rom. 6: 3. Gal. 3: 27.

tion. Probably on the Monday after the passover feast had closed, nine days after the resurrection. — *Schaff*. The eleven disciples. As the apostles were now usually styled, that being their official number after the loss of Judas (Mark 16: 14. Luke 24: 33). — *Binney*. Into a mountain. Better, to the mountain. The words imply some more definite announcement than that of vers. 7 and 10, and therefore, probably, some intermediate meeting. — *Ellicott*.

17. They worshipped him. Fell prostrate at his feet in reverence and awe. Some doubted. The apostles were all slow to believe. Never were men less credulous; and the fact that they were finally obliged to yield to the many infallible proofs of the risen Christ is strong evidence that he did actually rise from the dead. "They doubted, that we might never doubt." — *Binney*.

18. Unto them. Unto the apostles and other disciples, and through them to the whole church. — We are obliged to conclude that others (than the eleven) were present. Whether these others were the "500 brethren at once" of whom St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 15: 6, or some other disciples, does not appear. — *Alford*. All power. The English language contains no adequate equivalent for the word rendered *power*. It embraces the ideas of both *power* and *authority*, — power coupled with right. It here indicates Christ as the true Lord and King both of nature and of life, human and angelic. For the significance of this declaration comp. Dan. 7: 14. Observe, that the power given to Christ is alleged by him as a reason, not for *subduing*, but for *teaching*, all nations. His power is exercised in patience, long-suffering, and love, — a power whose highest exemplification is the cross. — *Abbott*. Is given unto me. The fulness of power to govern the universe was imparted to Christ at his resurrection; not as a new gift, but a confirmation and practical realization of the power over all things, which had been delivered unto him by the Father (see chap. 11: 27), and had been received by him in his human nature at the time of the incarnation. It was a restoration to the glory which was his, as Son of God, from eternity. But the special point to which he now directs his disciples' minds is that they serve One who has entered into full possession of unlimited dominion. — *The Bible Commentary*. In heaven. Over all principalities and powers of the spiritual world. Angels were to be henceforth "ministering spirits" "to the heirs of salvation." — *Cook*. Power with God, power at the throne, power where the world and all its affairs are controlled. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." — And in earth. Or "on the earth," the sphere of the Church, as a visible body, where it would have to struggle, and, by virtue of this charter, to prevail, until the end. — *Cook*.

19. Therefore. Because your Lord and Master has all power to make you successful. Teach all nations. "Teach" is here a different word from "teach" in ver. 20; Dr. Conant translates it, *Disciple all nations*. — *Make disciples of all nations*, with the added explanation how this is to be done, viz., by baptizing and teaching. Observe that the command to make disciples of *all nations* implies, (1) That Christianity is a universal religion, not merely one of the religions of the world from which, with others, we, in this later day, are to select an eclectic and universal religion; (2) that it is adapted to all nations and all classes (Rom. 1: 16), a claim which history has abundantly justified, but which was urged by early opponents as a conclusive objection to it; (3) that not a natural development, but obedience to the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ, constitutes the secret of true civilization among all nations, and thus that Christian missions are the mother of civilization; (4) that from all nations the members of Christ's Church triumphant are to be gathered to God by obedience to this commission (Rom. 10: 11-13). — *Abbott*. Baptizing them. The initiatory, admissory rite. No unprejudiced reader can doubt that it has reference to the *outward rite of BAPTISM*. — *Alford*. In the name, into the name. Not merely by the authority, but it indicates "the end and aim of baptism." "Into the name" means that converts are pledged by baptism to a faith, which has for its object the Being designated by that name, and which brings them into union with him. — *Cook*. The name. Observe the significance of the phraseology here, in its bearing on the truth that the Father, the Son,

*... the knowledge
in hearts, and
the divine*

nothing shall stand - in the world shall stand - in the mountain in Galilee at the farthest corner of the earth -

JUNE 13.

LESSON XI.

MATT. 28 : 8-20.

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end¹ of the world. Amen. *write -*

"Heaven is our Father's home in Victory" 39.

and the Holy Ghost constitute one only true God. The language is not, In the *names*, plural, but, In the *name*, singular, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is not by acceptance of God merely, that the nations are to be made disciples (Deism is not Christianity), but by accepting God as revealed in the Father by creation and providence, in the Son by his early life, sufferings, and death, and in the Holy Spirit in his constant spiritual presence in the hearts of the children of God. — *Abbott*. The union of the three names in one formula (as in the benediction of 2 Cor. 13, 14) is in itself a proof at once of the distinctness and equality of the three Divine Persons. — *Ellicott*.

20. Teaching them. The Church is set to be a grand TEACHING institution. Its business is educational. — *Jacobus*. The work is but begun when we have entered the Church. It is to be our school for life, where we are to be taught and trained in all truth and practical morality. To observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Observe, (1) *The theme of the Christian ministry*, — whatsoever Christ has commanded. Their duty is simply to expound and apply Christ's commands. This commission is inclusive ; nothing that Christ has commanded may be omitted from the instructions of the Church (Acts 20 : 27). It is exclusive : it shuts out from the pulpit ministry all purely secular science and philosophy (1 Cor. 1 : 17 ; 2 : 4. Rev. 22 : 18, 19). The power of the Church is the greatest when its ministry is most simply and truly scriptural. (2) *The authority of the Christian ministry*. It is based on the commands of Christ. The Church is to teach what he has commanded. It is, therefore, to teach with authority, as he did (Matt. 7 : 29, but with *his* authority, not with its own ; the authority of the Scripture, not of ecclesiastical councils and decrees. (3) *The object of the Christian ministry*. To bring men into subjection, not to the Church, or its ministry, but to Christ himself. The Church is to teach men, not merely to do Christ's commandments, but to keep watch over them, as a guard over his prisoner ; and this includes attentive study of the instructions of Christ, watching with prayer against temptation to insure obedience to the commands of Christ, and watching for the fulfilment of Christ's prophecies. Comp. Matt. 25 : 13 ; 26 : 41. John 14 : 15, 21-24. — *Abbott*. Practical teaching, including every principle of moral and spiritual duty, is thus inseparably connected with doctrinal teaching. — *Cook*. First, The MISSIONARY department (ver. 18) : "Go, make disciples of all nations" — and baptize them. They should join the Church. Second, The PASTORAL department (ver. 20) : "Teach them." Third, The ENCOURAGEMENTS to undertake and go through with this work. These are two ; one in the van, the other in the rear, of the commission itself. First encouragement : "All power in heaven" — the whole power of Heaven's love and wisdom and strength ; "and all power in earth" — power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements, to bend them to this one high object, the evangelization of the world, — all this "is given unto me," as the risen Lord of all, to be by me placed at your command : "go ye therefore." But there remains a second encouragement : "And lo, I am with you all the days ;" not only to perpetuity, but without one day's interruption, "even to the end of the world." — *J. F. and B. Lo, I*. In the fullest sense ; not the *divine* presence as distinguished from the humanity of Christ. His humanity is likewise with us. — *Alford*. With you. Mainly by the promise of the Father (Luke 24 : 49), which he has poured out on his Church. — *Alford*. It was not possible for Christ to be universally present while he was in the body. By his death he is with us all. — But observe that it is both a promise and a warning. He is present to rebuke and chasten, as well as to guide and guard and inspire (Rev. 3 : 19). — *Abbott*. Alway. All the days. It is a daily presence that is promised. Unto the end of the world. See on Lesson IV. It is the end of time ; of the Christian dispensation.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On "the resurrection body," see *Bibliotheca Sacra*, May, 1845, p. 292 ; Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures*, "Biology," p. 299 ; Max Müller's little volume on *Missions* ; Dibble's *Thoughts on Missions* ; Stevenson's *Praying and Working* ; Fish's *Primitive Piety Revived* ; and many others. Sermons by Chalmers, vol. vi. ; Spurgeon, Series 8 ; Beecher, Series 3 and 6 ; Hamilton, Wardlaw, Moody, Dwight, Griffin, &c.

...the resurrection from which we can & ought forward
 ...a man from which we can & ought forward
 ...the belief in immortality? "Be ye steadfast
 ...in movable - always abiding in the work of the Lord
 ...as much as ye know with your labour in
 ...in the Lord -

MATT. 23: 8-20 LESSON XI. SECOND QUARTER

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The resurrection.—In Dr. Brown's work on the resurrection, there is a beautiful parable from Hailey. The story is of a servant, who, receiving a silver cup from his master, suffers it to fall into a vessel of *agua fortis*, and, seeing it disappear, contends in argument with a fellow-servant that its recovery is impossible, until the master comes on the scene, and infuses salt water, which precipitates the silver from the solution; and then, by melting and hammering the metal, he restores it to its original shape. With this incident a sceptic—one of whose great stumbling-blocks was the resurrection—was so struck, that he ultimately renounced his opposition to the gospel, and became a partaker of the Christian hope of immortality. — *W. F. Crafts.*

II. Preach the gospel.—The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing: it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. The spirit of truth is the life-spring of all religion; and, where it exists, it must manifest itself, it must plead, it must persuade, it must convince and convert. There may be times when silence is gold, and speech silver; but there are times, also, when silence is death, and speech is life, — the very life of Pentecost. Look at the religions in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. *The former are alive, the latter are dying or dead.* — *Max Müller.*

III. Holding forth the word of life.—We remember to have read a traveller's conversation with the keeper of the light-house at Calais. The watchman was boasting of the brilliancy of his lantern, which can be seen ten leagues at sea, when the visitor said to him, "What if one of the lights should chance to go out?" — "Never, impossible!" he cried. "Sir," said he, pointing to the ocean, "yonder, where nothing can be seen, there are ships going by to all parts of the world. If to-night one of my burners were out, within six months would come a letter, saying, such a night, at such an hour, the light of Calais burned dim, the watchman neglected his post, and vessels were in danger. Ah! sir, sometimes in the dark nights in stormy weather I look out to sea, and I feel as if the eye of the whole world were looking at my light. Go out? burn dim? Oh, never!" Was the keeper of this light-house so vigilant, and shall Christians neglect their light, and suffer it to grow dim, — grow dim when, for need of its bright shining, some poor soul, struggling amid the waves of temptation, may be dashed upon the rocks of destruction? No. "*Hold forth the word of life.*"

"For sadder sight the eye can know,
 Than proud bark lost, or seaman's woe, —
 The shipwreck of the soul."

...a thought - immortality - Dr. Guthrie. have
 ...the source of the infinite evil, and the
 ...of the soul.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 8. Joy and fear are often mingled in this life.
2. The Christian is eager to make known to others his new-found joys.
3. Those first saw Jesus who most loved him and most zealously sought him. — *Cyprian.*
4. The sabbath day changed from Saturday to Sunday, is a perpetual monument to the truth of the resurrection.
5. Vers. 11-15. Scepticism is no modern invention.
6. The most improbable lies against religion will be believed by those who are too sceptical to believe in the miracles and life of Christ.
7. The best things and the best people are lied about.
8. We have hope in preaching and teaching, because our Master has all power.
9. The "Narrow Church" is that which thinks chiefly of this world, and those nearest us. The true "Broad Church" seeks to save the whole world.
10. Every Christian should by baptism profess his religion.
11. Every church should be a training-school for heaven.
12. All churches and Christians should seek to preach the gospel to all nations, (1) Because it is commanded. (2) It is the nature of true religion. (3) The heathen need the gospel as much as we. (4) The purity of the Church depends on it. (5) Each individual needs the work. (6) It is a great proof of the universality, and therefore the truth, of Christ's religion. (7) Missionary success furnishes a strong proof of the increasing power of Christianity. (8) It is a great privilege.

THIRD QUARTER.

From July 4, to Sept. 26.

STUDIES IN GENESIS.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

I. AUTHOR. — *Moses*, born B.C. 1571, and died in 1451, aged 120.

II. NAME. — *Genesis* means the origin of things, and describes the creation, or origin of the world, of man, and of things as we see them.

III. DATE. — Probably during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, B.C. 1491–1451.

IV. TIME. — The Book of Genesis covers 2,369 years, — from the creation of Adam, A.M. 1, to the death of Joseph, A.M. 2369, or B.C. 1635.

V. CONSTRUCTION. — It is clear that Moses must have derived his knowledge of the events which he records in Genesis, either from immediate divine revelation, or from oral tradition, or from written documents. The nature of many of the facts related, and the minuteness of the narration, render it extremely improbable that immediate revelation was the source from whence they were drawn. That his knowledge should have been derived from oral tradition, appears morally impossible, when we consider the great number of names, ages, dates, and minute events which are recorded. The conclusion, then, seems fair, that he must have obtained his information from written documents coeval, or nearly so, with the events which they recorded, and composed by persons intimately acquainted with the subjects to which they relate. He may have collected these, with additions, from authentic tradition or existing monuments, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, into a single book. Certain it is that several of the first chapters of Genesis have the air of being made up of selections from very ancient documents, written by different authors at different periods. The variety which is observable in the names and titles of the Supreme Being is appealed to among the most striking proofs of this fact. This is obvious in the English translation, but still more so in the Hebrew original. In Gen. 1 to 2:3, which is really one piece of composition, as the title, ver. 4, "These are the generations," shows, the name of the Most High is uniformly *Elohim, God*. In chap. 2:4 to chap. 3, which may be considered the second document, the title is uniformly *Yehovah Elohim, Lord God*; and in the third, including chap. 4, it is *Yehovah, Lord*, only; while in chap. 5 it is *Elohim, God*, only, except in ver. 29, where a quotation is made, and *Yehovah* used. It is hardly conceivable that all this should be the result of mere accident. The changes of the name correspond exactly to the changes in the narratives and the titles of the several pieces. "Now, do all these accurate quotations," says Professor Stowe, "impair the credit of the Mosaic books, or increase it? Is Marshall's Life of Washington to be regarded as unworthy of credit, because it contains copious extracts from Washington's correspondence, and literal quotations from important public documents? Is not its value greatly enhanced by this circumstance? The objection is altogether futile. In the common editions of the Bible the Pentateuch occupies about one hundred and fifty pages, of which perhaps ten may be taken up with quotations. This surely is no very large proportion for an historical work extending through so long a period." — *Bush, Notes on Genesis*. On the supposition that writing was known to Adam, Gen. 1–4, containing the first two of these documents, formed the Bible of Adam's descendants, or the antediluvians, Gen. 1 to 11:9, being the sum of these two and the following three, constitutes the Bible of the descendants of Noah. The whole of Genesis may be called the Bible of the posterity of Jacob; and the Five Books of the Law were the first Bible of Israel as a nation. — *Canon Cook's Bible Commentary*.

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LESSON I.—JULY 4, 1880.

THE CREATION.—GEN. 1: 1-3; 2: 4-8.

INTRODUCTION.

The first two chapters of the Bible describe the *creation*; the last two, the *new creation*. It first goes from chaos to Eden, and then from the moral chaos of sin to the heavenly paradise. The whole Bible describes and carries on the work from one to the other. There can be no more fitting beginning for the Bible than the first chapters of Genesis. And there is an exact and perfect harmony between Genesis and the latest discoveries of science. Professor Dana says, of the first chapter of Genesis, "Examining it as a geologist, I find it to be in perfect accord with known science: therefore, as a Christian, I assert that the Bible narrative must be inspired."

I. The works of God *must* be in harmony with the word of God. The Bible is not intended to teach science, but if it teaches false science it cannot be true. Every heathen religion that gives an account of creation proves itself false by teaching false science. The Bible alone stands this test.

II. The Bible does not and must not use scientific terms, but must use popular language, or to most of the ages it would *seem* false, while it *was* true. It says, "The sun rises and sets;" and so does the modern scientist himself, though it is only popularly, and not scientifically, true.

III. There is absolutely no conflict between the Bible and science. The apparent conflict is either between the new science and the old, which science taught the believers of the Bible: or between unsettled scientific theories and the Bible; or between science and wrong interpretations of the Bible, but which do not belong to the Bible. Between the Bible, fairly and rightly interpreted, and all that is firmly settled in science, there is to-day absolute harmony.

IV. There are *two great harmonies* included in to-day's lesson: the first, referred to in chap. 1: 1,—*the act of creation*; the second, in chap. 2: 4,—*the order of creation*.—P.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. In the beginning ¹ God created the heaven and the earth. | 2. And the earth ² was without form, and void; and darkness <i>was</i> upon |
|---|---|

¹ Prov. 8: 23. John 1: 1, 2. Heb. 1: 10. ² Job 38: 4. Ps. 33: 6. Isa. 40: 26. Jer. 51: 15. ³ Job 26: 7. Jer. 4: 23.

EXPLANATORY.

1. In the beginning. At the very first, when heaven and earth began their existence, at the commencement of all created things. God. In the original the word means "the Everlasting," and in the plural "the Eternal Powers;" correctly rendered "God," the Eternal Supreme Being.—*Murphy*. Created. Caused to be that which did not before

the face of the deep. And the Spirit¹ of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3. And God said,² Let there be light : and there was light.³

4. ¶ These *are* the generations of

¹ Job 26: 13. Ps. 104: 30. ² Ps. 33: 9. Matt. 8: 3. ³ 2 Cor. 4: 6. Eph. 5: 14.

exist. — It is remarkable that this term (*bdrd* when, as here, translated “create”) is in the Scripture invariably applied to God, and never to any created being. — *W. Fraser in Blending Lights*. Another word (“made”) is used in this chapter for the fashioning of created matter into new forms.

THE FIRST GREAT HARMONY of Genesis with science here appears. Dr. Guyot has called attention to the fact that the word “create” is used *three times*, and only three, in this chapter: (1) for the origination of *matter*, ver. 1; (2) the origination of *life*, ver. 21 (the summary of the fifth day); and (3) the origination of *soul*, ver. 27. Now, it is remarkable that these are exactly the points where Nature has said to Science, “Thus far, and no farther.” All the powers of modern science have failed to originate *matter*, or *life*, or *soul*. After they have these, men can go on developing; but they cannot create. Here must come in a *personal* God, who can *create*. It is remarkable also, that, while the development theory is still unproved, the wording of this chapter will harmonize with this theory of second causes: “Let the waters bring forth,” “Let the earth bring forth.” It is not evolution instead of God, but evolution under God’s control, with God as creator and guide of all. It is well to note that Genesis states the *fact* that God created all things: it does *not state* HOW he created them. God makes a tree as really when it grows in the field as if he had sent it ready-made from heaven. Let scientists discover *how*. We know, and hold to the *fact*, that *God* creates all. — *P. The heavens*. The skies, the heavenly bodies, — all were created by God. Our globe of 25,000 miles in circumference is but a speck in the universe of matter. The sun outweighs 355,000 earths. There are 25,000,000 other sun-systems in our cluster alone. The telescope has disclosed to us about 6,000 such nebulae (or clusters). What a creator is God! — *From Boardman*. This does not fix the antiquity of the globe. No one knows what ages intervene between the first and second verses.

2. The earth was without form, and void. A formless, lifeless mass. — *Keil*. Confusion and emptiness. — *T. Lewis*. It refers either to the time when the sun-system was in a gaseous state, or to a later stage, when this earth was surrounded by the steam and clouds in its cooling state, just before it began to be a habitable earth. In either case it was absolutely formless. **Darkness was upon the face of the deep.** The *deep* is the formless fluid, either water or gas, referred to above. On the nebular hypothesis this is the darkness which would necessarily be in inactive gases before motion was imparted. On the other, as represented by Hugh Miller’s “Mosaic Vision of Creation,” it would refer to the earth when all the light of heaven was shut out by the thick clouds of steam surrounding the world. In either case science says the world would be entirely dark. — *P. The Spirit of God*. The breath of God, the divine power energizing in nature, the source of vegetable and animal, as well as the rational and moral life. — *Taylor Lewis*. Air is the emblem of the Divine Spirit; a substance invisible, yet diffusive, permeating, animating, quickening, inspiring, forceful. — *Boardman*. **Moved upon.** Hovered over, brooded upon. — *Lange*. Caused to flutter, produced vibrations, set the matter in motion. — *Waring*. **The waters.** The deep. It means fluids, liquid or gaseous. All power and life come from the Spirit of God. This is a picture, too, of the spiritual creation of each soul. The first movements toward a new and true life in the chaos and darkness of sin are from the Spirit of God. — *P.*

3. And God said. Have we any thing here of the Trinity? “In the beginning was the Word (John 1 : 1).” “And God said, Let there be light.” And we can see for ourselves “the Spirit of God moving,” &c. We have, then, God (the Creator), the Word, and the Spirit, all brought before us in the work of creation. — *Gibson, Ages before Moses*. **Let there be light.** The Hebrew word for *light* is wide enough to cover *heat* and *electricity*, the primal forces of the universe. — *Gibson*. Science teaches that light is produced by a disturbed action or combination of molecules. Matter in an inactive state, without force, would be dark, cold, and dead. The first effect of the mutual action of its molecules would be the production of light. Here Genesis is in exact accordance with the teachings of science. Mere human invention would have placed the sun first in order as the source of light. The idea of the appearance of light on the first day, independently of the shining of the sun, is a result of modern scientific research, and so foreign to the natural conceptions of the human mind in the early period of its history, that we must ascribe

the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for

the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground.

6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7. And the LORD God formed man

this marvellously exact statement in the first of Genesis to some higher origin.—*Y. P. Thompson, in Man in Genesis and Geology*. The abandonment of the Mosaic account of creation would necessitate the abandonment of science itself.—*Waring*.

2:4. These. The account just given in the verses omitted, but which should be carefully read in the Scriptures. Here begins the second account of creation, the one in its relation to man. **Are the generations.** The acts of forming or generating, the births. Lord God. *Jehovah* God, so used throughout this second account. *Jehovah* is the covenant God, the Saviour; and here it is shown that *Jehovah* is the creator God. The account of the six days' creation is

THE SECOND GREAT HARMONY; *the order of creation, the six days*.—This harmony will best be seen by the accompanying chart. That the DAYS are not days of 24 hours, is clearly seen by the use of the word in these chapters. (1) It is used of three days before there could have been any such days, as the sun did not appear till the fourth day. (2) In the fourth verse the word "day" is used to cover all the six days of creation, and is therefore a period, not a day of 24 hours. (3) We continually use the word in this way: as, "He was a useful man in his *day*." (4) That this definition is not gotten up merely to meet the geologists, is shown from the fact that the early fathers, Irenæus, Origen, Augustine, and others, gave it this meaning before geology was dreamed of. EACH DAY began with the EVENING, and ended with the MORNING; began in darkness, ended in light; began small and dim and feeble, and ended in its fulness and completion. It is probable that this whole wonderful revelation of the past was made known to Moses, as the future was made known to the prophets, by a series of visions, each day beginning feebly, and increasing to its fulness; and so each period appeared as a day to Moses. See Hugh Miller's "Mosaic Vision of Creation."—*P*.

OF THE SEVENTH DAY.—There is no mention of evening and morning. It is still the seventh day, and God is using that seventh day as he would have us use it, in the moral training and redemption of man. "The Fourth Commandment, as explained by Moses, requires the supposition of long creative days. It cannot be meant that God works six natural days, and rests on the seventh, as we do."—*Dawson*. See Tayler Lewis, "Introduction to Lange on Genesis," p. 131.

5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth. That is, these are the generations, or this is the history, of the production of the plants and herbs, prior to the ordinary mode of propagation from the seed.—*Bush*. Plant of the field. The higher orders. Had not caused it to rain. The absence of rain was *somewhere* in this summed-up day of creation; its place, however, is not fixed in the series, and it is alluded to not for its own sake, but in connection with the plants, as originating from a higher causality.—*Tayler Lewis*. PARAPHRASE OF VERS. 4-6.—These statements in the first chapter are the generations of the heavens and the earth, *setting forth the order IN WHICH* (when) they were created, in the day (*time unlimited*) the Lord God made *all things, even* the earth and the heavens, *the extremes of greatness, down to the least, even* every plant of the field; *going back into eternity* before it (the plant) was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew, *even to that remote period when* the Lord God had not caused it to *rain upon the earth*, and there was not a man to till the ground, but a mist went up to water the whole face of the ground.

6. But there went up. There came a time when rain began to fall, and the present condition of the atmosphere came into existence. No wonder that this is referred to. Ponder what a stupendous thing evaporation means. The average quantity of water held in the air is 54,460,000,000,000 tons. The annual rainfall is estimated at 186,240 cubic miles. Reflect, now, that water in its natural state is 773 times heavier than air. And now suppose that you had never heard of the principle of evaporation, and that you were required to lift up this vast mass of water, one, two, miles into the air and keep it there!—*Boardman*.

7. Formed man of the dust. This part of the verse gives the account of the forma-

| SCIENCE. | | | | | BIBLE. | | |
|----------|--|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| DAYS. | NATURAL HISTORY. | Groups of Rock. | Periods. | Ages. | ORDER OF CREATION. | DAYS. | |
| 7 | No new species of plant or animal are known to have been created since man came on earth. | Soil. | Age of Man and Mind. | | God's rest from creation, and work for redemption of man. God's sabbath. | 7 | |
| 6 | Man is the last and highest creation. The land animals of various orders. | Alluvial Drift. Pliocene. Miocene. Eocene. | Quaternary. Tertiary. | Creation of man. Mammals. | Man. Cattle. Land Animals. Mammals. | 6 | |
| 5 | Higher animals are introduced Immense monsters. | Chalk. Lias. | Secondary. | Birds. Huge monsters. Reptiles. | Birds. Monsters. Reptiles. Invertebrates. | 5 | |
| 4 | The mists so clear away that the sun and stars appear, and so affect the warmth and light as to produce the seasons. | Limestone. | Permian. | Plants. | Sun, moon, and stars appear; and hence the seasons of the year. Not <i>created</i> now, but formed. | 4 | |
| 3 | The earth very warm, and in the dim light springs up <i>vegetation</i> in huge amounts, forming the coal, and thus purifying the air from carbon, and making it fit for breathing. The earth's crust thrown into folds. The first continents appear. | Coal measures. Old Red Sandstone. Limestone. | Carboniferous. Devonian. | Fishes. | Vegetation. Dry land appears. | 3 | |
| 2 | The cooling went on till there was clear air between the seas below and the clouds above; no <i>visible</i> life,—no land. | Niagara. Trenton. Potsdam. | Silurian. | Mollusks. | The expanse (firmament) placed between the waters in the clouds and the waters of the seas. Universal ocean. | 2 | |
| 1 | Common Theory. | Metamorphic Granite. | Gneiss. Slate. | Radiates. | Light. | Chaos. Creation of Matter. | 1 |
| | Nebular Theory. 1st and 2d days. | When motion was imparted to matter by God, by its coming together it produced light and heat. (1st day.) As the gases condensed, it threw off luminous rings like Saturn's, which condensed each into a world, moving around the central sun. Each of these worlds was a ball of fire. They began at length to cool. This earth cooled so that all the gases that compose water formed into water, but was still so hot that this was one immense cloud of mist. As the cooling went on, it condensed into water, and formed the ocean, which covered the whole surface. (2d day.) | | | | | |

of the dust¹ of the ground, and breathed² into his nostrils³ the breath of life; and man⁴ became a living soul.

8. ¶ And the LORD God planted⁵ a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

¹ Chap. 3: 19. ² Ps. 103: 14. ³ Isa. 64: 8. ⁴ 1 Cor. 15: 47. ⁵ Job 33: 4. ⁶ Isa. 2: 22. ⁷ 1 Cor. 15: 45. ⁸ Ezek. 31: 8, 9.

tion of man's body. It does not say *how* the body was formed of the dust: it simply states the *fact*. Our bodies to-day are formed of the dust, as really as was Adam's: the elements of our bodies are the elements of the dust; we eat that which grows out of the dust. If the development theory, as to our bodies, should prove true, it would not affect the statement of fact in Genesis, as to our bodies being formed of dust; and it makes no difference to us whether our bodies were derived from lower animals, or whether we eat them, and so form our bodies from them, in either case from the dust. Let scientific men search this question out: we simply adhere to the fact. This verse is a mode of showing that there is a divine life beyond the earthly life. — *P. Breathed the breath of life.* The Hebrew is *lives*, including the animal and spiritual life. God's Spirit is first imaged under the symbol of breath, and the same is imparted to man. *This*, and not the forming of the body, is the *real creation of man*. *Man became a living soul.* This is the imparting the divine life to man. God made man in *his own image*. Not the body, but the spirit. His soul is of a nature like God's, — spiritual, reasoning, thinking, loving, religious, immortal. — *P.* Man was like God in *nature*, being spiritual, free, and a moral agent; in *moral* qualities, righteous and holy; and in *relative position* to the lower creatures. — *Dr. John Hall, in Questions of the Day.* THE CREATION OF WOMAN. — Afterwards God created woman from man, vers. 21, 22, by taking a rib (not merely the bone, but a piece of the side), and forming it into woman. — It is strictly in accordance with the processes of life as revealed by modern scientific research. Only two modes of propagating are known, — by sexes, and by fission (i.e., cuttings, or budding). Generation by fission is now constantly going on in many of the lower animals, as well as in plants. Adam was the only one of the race. God chose the only method in existence among his creatures which the nature of the case rendered possible. So from a portion of Adam made he a woman. A miracle, indeed (as all creations are miracles), but a miracle conforming, as far as the conditions permitted, to methods already in use. — *Waring.* Woman was taken out of man, not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled under foot, but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. — *Matthew Henry.*

8. *Planted a garden* (an enclosed or separated place, specially beautified and cultured) eastward. Either in the eastern part of Eden, or eastward of the place where this account was written. — *Lange.* The garden was but a small portion of Eden. Eden. A large region in the East, somewhere on the Euphrates and Tigris, but exactly where, is a matter of dispute. Probably it includes the vast region from the Caspian and Black Seas, to the Persian Gulf, watered by the four rivers named below, which all rise in the hill region of Armenia. Two of the four rivers of Eden, all agree, rise here, — the Euphrates, 1,500 miles long, and the Tigris (Hiddekel), 1,136 miles long. They rise not more than four or five miles apart. Between the two main sources of the Euphrates, and about ten miles from each, rises the Araxes (probably the *Gihon*), and flows 1,000 miles to the Caspian Sea, encompassing the Asiatic Cush; while at no great distance from the Euphrates is the origin of the Halys (Pison), which runs a winding course 700 miles to the Black Sea. That the Halys is the Pison, is favored by the striking similarity of the original names of Havilah and Colchis, the region of the golden fleece, which was situated on the shores of the Black Sea. — *Professor S. C. Bartlett, in Smith's Bible Dictionary.* Le-normant thinks that the Gihon is the Oxus, still called Ojiboun by the people on its banks; and the Pison is the upper Indus; and these, with the Euphrates, would decide the location of Eden. — *P.* And there he put the man. All the science of ethnology, and of languages, points to this region as the origin of man.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Perhaps the two most helpful books on the agreement of science with the Bible are Charles B. Waring's *Miracle of To-day*, and "The Two Records," and "The Mosaic Vision of Creation," in Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks*. Then follow Dr. J. P. Thompson's *Man in Genesis and Geology*; Dawson's *Nature and the Bible*; Taylor

Lewis's *Six Days of Creation*. Boardman's *Creative Week* is especially good for its practical applications. Gibson's *Ages before Moses* is excellent. P. W. Grant's *Bible Record of Creation True for every Age*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Coleridge states that in the *Zendavesta*, the sacred book of the Persians, the description of the origin of the world is almost literally taken from the first chapter of Genesis; but they have made two alterations,—(1) that the sun was created before light; and, (2) herbs and plants were created after the sun. Both natural alterations; and it shows the inspiration of Genesis, that it makes no such mistakes, but agrees exactly with the latest science.

II. There is a very interesting confirmation of these chapters of Genesis given in George Smith's "Chaldean Account of Genesis." A very closely agreeing account of creation has been lately discovered written on the tablets which composed the royal library of the Assyrian kings, at Nineveh, "and show that from B. C. 2000 to 1500 the Babylonians believed in a similar story to that in Genesis."—*George Smith*.

PRACTICAL.

1. The creation is a revelation of God,—of the Three in One.
2. God's works and God's word always agree.
3. We understand God's works by his word, and his word by his works.
4. God uses even unbelievers to search his works, and add new proofs to the inspiration of his word.
5. The more closely and exactly we keep to the Bible, the more exactly we arrive at the truth: many of the objections come from putting on the Word what God did not put there.
6. God's Spirit is the source of all light and life.
7. God has been long preparing the world for man, and has treasures which unfold as man is able to receive and use them.
8. God's rest and sabbath is a type of ours,—rest from the world for moral and spiritual growth.
9. Man was made in the image of God.
10. God made a paradise for the man he created, and has prepared a better paradise for all who are new-created by him.

LESSON II.—JULY 11, 1880.

THE FALL AND THE PROMISE.—GEN. 3:1-15.

TIME.—B.C. 4004, soon after the creation of Adam.

PLACE.—The Garden of Eden—somewhere in the large district of Eden, lying between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian and Black Seas.

THE NARRATIVE.—This is an historical account of the first human sin.—*Cowles*. Let us recall to mind what a large part of this story must be true, even if it made no pretence to be an inspired narrative. It is not certainly a myth that there is a human race, and there must have been a first pair, and this pair must have had a home and a creator at hand; and must have made their first move in virtue or sin; and from what sin we now see in the world, that they early left the paradise of virtue, is the verdict of history.—*Professor Swing*. No account can be imagined so beautiful, so natural, so honorable to man and God, as the simple, straightforward, literal story as given in the Bible.—*P*.

MAN IN EDEN.—He was innocent, perfect, but not cultured or with outward appliances of civilization. The skins for clothing and stone implements do not prove that the first man was a savage at heart. Plato or Socrates are as great in humblest hut as if living like Solomon in all his glory.

THE TREE OF LIFE.—Probably a tree which by divine endowment with medicinal qualities would keep their bodies from decaying with age, and would heal any accidental injuries. So Whately; who assumes that our first parents were in the habit of using it, but, ceasing to do so, would die at last, though their constitution had been so

far fortified as to insure for them and their immediate descendants a life much longer than our natural term. — It thus becomes a symbol of the tree of immortal life, in Revelation.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. — *This is not "the tree of knowledge," as some represent, but only of the knowledge of good and evil, by its being a test of character and action. It was a marked tree, placed in the midst of the garden as a necessary moral test. What was God's purpose in this prohibition? The answer is at hand: To give the first human pair a test of obedience which should be naturally a means of moral culture and of growth in holiness. — Cowles. It was not to make them fall. It was not because only by falling into sin could they know evil, and good by evil. But it was a test by which they should know either good if they obeyed, or evil if they disobeyed. Had they obeyed, they would have known good infinitely more than they did by falling into sin, and know evil by contrast and not by experience. It is a slander on God and goodness to speak as if men could not know good by the choice of the good, instead of by the experience of evil through the choice of evil. A writer on art says that the common interpretation that an artist can paint only what he has experienced in full, is blasphemy, as if no man could know evil which he has not done. "He need not have been a murderer of innumerable children in order to represent the Massacre of the Innocents, if only he has and loves one living child, and thinks—it may die. He need not have drained the cup of vice to the dregs, that he may paint Lucretia, if he only has a wife whom he loves, and thinks—the king's son may appear before her with the poniard or dishonor. Thus the artist hits every thing if he has been a genuine man." (Independent.) Thus it was meant that Adam should know evil only by experiencing the good, and not by the path he chose of knowing good only by the contrast with the evil he experienced. The question was, how to develop conscience in man. There must be some test of good and evil, for him to choose. It would be very difficult for him except by some outward prohibition. He could not even know good, or what it meant, till he chose it when tempted to do evil. By that choice he would know good and evil, in the heavenly way by choosing good, in the hellish way by choosing evil. — P.*

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| 1. Now the serpent ¹ was more subtle ² than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he | said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ³ Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? |
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¹ Rev. 12: 9. ² 2 Cor. 11: 3. ³ Chap. 2: 17.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **The serpent.** The fall of man was effected by the seductions of a serpent. That it was a real serpent, is evident from the plain and artless style of the history, and from the many allusions made to it in the New Testament. But the material serpent was the instrument, or tool, of a higher agent, Satan, or the Devil, to whom the sacred writers apply from this incident the reproachful name of "the Serpent," "the old Dragon." — *J. F. and B.* No mere animal could have taken the part this serpent did. But it may be doubted whether Eve knew this. It may have been a very fine serpent, — a very plausible serpent, — but still a serpent, we conceive, it must have been. — *Kittó.* It is remarkable that the Samaritan Pentateuch has here "liar" instead of "serpent," the two words differing in Hebrew only by one letter. — *Alford.* Was more subtle than any beast of the field. That is, more cunning, wily, insidious. — *Bush.* For this reason the serpent was chosen as Satan's instrument. And he said. Really, Satan, through, or apparently through, the serpent. Even ventriloquists can do as much now, and it is not strange that Satan could then. Yea, hath God said. He ventures upon a half-questioning, half-insinuating, remark, — "It is so, then, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." This seems to be a feeler for some weak point, where the fidelity of the woman to her Maker might be shaken. It hints at something strange, if not unjust or unkind, on the part of God. No startling proposal of disobedience is made, no advice, no persuasion to partake of the fruit, is employed. — *Murphy.*

2. **We may eat of the fruit of the trees.** God gave man a wide range: every kind of pleasure and delight, every form of beauty, every thing pleasant to the taste, was given him, so that there was no need to eat the forbidden fruit. This life is not narrow, but very broad: its range is very large. It is not a prison from which to escape, but a universe to enjoy.

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden :

3. But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent¹ said unto the woman,² Ye shall not surely die :

5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat,

¹ John 8: 44. ² 1 Tim. 2: 14.

3. But of the fruit of the tree, . . . Ye shall not eat of it (see Introduction). Here is the announcement of a great principle, that human life is a *restricted* life, a life subjected to law ; and he who confesses this subjection remains in Eden, and he who denies it is banished. As God made the ocean to roll between shores, and said to it, "Thus far and no farther," so he placed the created soul between banks, and said, "Here only may thy bright waters flow." The banks are not narrow. Human life need not be called a river, for it is vast as the ocean, deep and strong and sublime ; but it has a shore all around, and along that shore the cherubim stand, and flaming swords gleam, to banish those who cross the boundary marked all around by the finger of the Almighty. — *Professor Swing*. The forbidden tree stands in every paradise of virtue and enjoyment. God has made a boundless provision for natural appetites, but there is always a limit, in going beyond which paradise is lost. The desire of progress, of acquiring property, of enjoying earth's blessings, is right ; but the forbidden tree of gaining them by injuring others, by falsehood or fraud or selfishness, stands near. God wants us to enjoy, but in the heavenly way ; and to gain any enjoyment by any kind of wrong, is to eat the forbidden tree, and lose paradise. — *P*. Neither shall ye touch it ; i.e., keep away from the temptation. He that touches the forbidden tree is already half-fallen. Lest ye die. It was spiritual death, the death of sin, and natural death, the death of the body. It would *begin* the very day they should eat of that tree (2 : 17). Neither kind of death was completed on that day, but in both body and soul the process was begun : they passed over the boundary-line that separated life from death. All diseases, and pains, and ruin of body come from sin. "It is not sufficiently borne in mind, that man's exclusion from the tree of life, which could have conferred immortality, was the carrying-out of this sentence." — *Alford*. "This answer shows that the first of our race sinned against a clear, known command" (Rom. 5: 13). — *Gerlach*.

4. Ye shall not surely die. Satan here gives the direct lie to what God had said. Probably Eve had little knowledge of what death meant. And Satan told an *apparent* truth, for at first they would not appear to die. But a lie mingled with a half-truth, or in the form of a truth, is the most dangerous of all lies. — *P*.

5. Your eyes shall be opened. His language is so constructed that while he *meant* one thing, she would naturally *understand* another. By "opening the eyes," she understood a further and higher degree of wisdom, as the phrase imports (Acts 26: 18. Eph. 1: 18). But he meant it of their perceiving their own misery, and feeling remorse of conscience. By "being as gods" (Elohim), she probably understood the being elevated almost to an equality with the Deity himself in point of knowledge and dignity ; but he probably meant it of their being brought to the condition of the angels that fell, as angels are sometimes styled *Elohim* (Ps. 8: 6). By "knowing good and evil" she doubtless understood a kind of divine omniscience ; whereas his meaning was that they should have a *woeful experience* of the difference between good and evil, or between happiness and misery, such as he himself had. — *Bush*.

6. Saw that the tree was good, &c. He addressed the temptation first to the woman, who fell into the threefold sin of sensuality, pleasure, and ambition, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." She "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise ;" and she ate the fruit, and gave it to her husband. The threefold appeal of the Tempter to the infirmities of our nature may be traced also in the temptation of Christ, the second Adam, who "was in all points likewise tempted, but *without* sin." — *William Smith*.

7. Their eyes were opened. As Satan promised ; but alas ! what did they see ? not heaven and wisdom and glory, as they expected, but their own guilt and shame and folly. They took Satan's road to heaven, and it led to hell. A similar effect always follows the

and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew¹ that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam² and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid,³ because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

11. And he said, Who told thee *that* thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12. And the man said,⁴ The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14. And the LORD God said unto

¹ Chap. 2: 25. ² Jer. 23: 24. Amos 9: 2, 3. ³ 1 John 3: 20. ⁴ Job 31: 33. Prov. 28: 13.

commission of known sin. — *P.* Knew that they were naked. They stood ashamed in each other's presence, and endeavored to hide the disgrace of their spiritual nakedness by covering the body. The natural feeling of shame had its origin, not in sensuality, or any physical corruption, but in the consciousness of guilt before God. — *Keil.* Sewed fig leaves. Twisted, platted, or fastened together, leaves of the common fig-tree.

8. The voice of the Lord God walking. It is not said that God appeared in any form, though the Christian fathers supposed that every such appearance of God was that of his eternal Son. — *From Lange.* It is not improbable that now for the first time a fearful tempest attended with loud peals of thunder was the occasion of their terror. The epithet "walking" is to be joined, not with "Lord," but with "voice." — *Bush.* In the cool of the day. In the breeze of the day, toward evening, when the cool breezes blow, the time of meditation. Hid themselves amongst the trees. In the thick shades. — Conscience drove Adam behind the trees. The consciousness of what he was terrified him. — *C. H. M.* Sinners ever try to hide themselves from God, and in vain. So Jonah ran away from God, but not to escape.

9. God called. God will seek after man to call him back. — *Jacobus.* Where art thou? This question proved two things: (1) that man was lost; and (2) that God had come to seek: man's sin, and God's amazing grace. — *C. H. M.* It is the question God asks us all, — and that we ought ever to answer, — exactly where in God's work, in spiritual life, in the kingdom of Christ, we are.

10. I was afraid. Sin makes cowards of us all. Because I was naked. Adam's reply is full of evasion. He confesses not his sin, but only his fear and shame at his bodily nakedness. The question just asked had given him opportunity to own his sin and misery. His sense of bodily nakedness is indeed the sad proof of his nakedness of soul, that could not any longer bear the sight of God. And now fear has taken possession of his soul, where all was peace before. — *Jacobus.*

11. Who told thee that thou wast naked? That is, whence didst thou acquire the consciousness of thy nakedness? He would extort the confession from his own lips. — *Bush.*

12. The woman whom thou gavest me. Here we find him actually laying the blame of his shameful fall on the circumstances in which God had placed him, and thus, indirectly, on God himself. This is ever the way with fallen man: every one and every thing is blamed but *self*. — *C. H. M.* The loss of love that comes out in this interposing of his wife is particularly denoted in this, that he grudges to call her "Eve," or "my wife."

13. The serpent beguiled me. Led me astray; deceived me by flattering lies. But who compelled Eve to listen to his seductions, and to confide in them more than in the word of God? — *Calvin.* She, too, lays the blame on others.

14. Cursed above all cattle. The Judge pronounces a doom, first, on the material serpent, which is cursed above all creatures: from being a model of grace and elegance in form, it has become the type of all that is odious, disgusting, and low (*Leclerc, Rosenmüller*); or the curse has converted its natural condition into a punishment: it is now branded with infamy, and avoided with horror. Next, on the spiritual Serpent, — the seducer: al-

the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust¹ shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between² thy seed and her seed; ³it shall bruise⁴ thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

¹ Isa. 65: 25. Mic. 7: 17. ² Matt. 13: 38. John 8: 44. ³ John 3: 8. ⁴ Isa. 7: 24. Matt. 1: 23. Luke 1: 35. ⁵ Rom. 16: 20. Eph. 4: 8. Rev. 12: 7, 8.

ready fallen, he was to be still more degraded. — *J. F. and B.* No injury was really done to the serpent, for being the unconscious instrument of Satan; but he remains a type and illustration to man, of his great enemy, — degrading, crawling, deceitful, mean. Nothing is so mean and so degrading as sin. — *P.* The judgment passed upon the serpent is symbolical of the condemnation of the Devil. The creature, as Satan's instrument and type, is doomed to an accursed and degraded life; and the enmity that has ever since existed between him and man is the symbol of the conflict between the powers of hell and all that is good in the human race. — *William Smith.* Dust shalt thou eat. Not as its only food, but that while crawling in the dust it would also swallow dust. — *Keil.*

15. Enmity between thy seed and her seed. A fact as to serpents and the human race. But there is an unmistakable allusion to the hostile being behind the serpent. Bruise thy head . . . his heel. The serpent can only seize the heel of the man who walks upright; whereas the man can crush the head of the serpent who crawls in the dust. The bite in the heel, however pernicious, is not immediately fatal, and utterly incurable, like the crushing of the serpent's head. — *Keil.* "Her seed," and "his," give the appearance of a personal conflict and victory. This inference is strengthened by the promise being given to the seed of the *woman*. There has been but one descendant of Eve who had no earthly father, and he "came to destroy the works of the Devil." — *Cook.* This verse has been called "the first gospel." The gospel, to be a genuine gospel, must come in the form of a curse upon sin. Love is the fulfilling of the law; but hatred of sin is the only portal to true and pure and holy love. Thy seed and her seed are also the children of Satan, and the children of God. — *Gibson.* Satan can injure men; he can arouse persecution; he can bring calamity, as to Job; he can bruise the heel of Christians, — their lower and human nature; but they can wholly conquer him, by the victory which Jesus Christ gives them. Satan bruised Christ's heel, in Gethsemane, and on the cross; but Jesus Christ gained the victory over Satan, and will utterly defeat him. — *P.* The promise implies (1) that God would deliver Eve from evil, and the power of the tempter, and so introduce the work of redemption; and (2) that she herself should be saved. — *P. W. Grant.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

See especially for its setting of the truth, and some excellent illustrations, Professor Swing's *Truths for To-Day*, the sermon on "The Lost Paradise." On all, but especially ver. 15, Gibson's *Ages before Moses*, Lectures IV. and V. An illustration of forbidden fruit, in *Essays of Elia*, "The Last Peach;" and also Charles Lamb's adaptation of one of Crabbe's tales, concerning Haroun Al-Raschid; both found also, in *Side-lights on Scripture Texts*, by Jacox. Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Professor Phelps's *Studies in the Old Testament*, "The Twin Serpents;" P. W. Grant's *The Bible Record of Creation True for Every Age*, p. 335.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. We have read of a singular tree which bears the appropriate name of the *Judas-tree*. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects, and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree the ground is strewn with the victims of its fatal fascinations. That alluring tree, which decoys only to destroy, is a vivid emblem of the deceitfulness of sin. There is only one remedy for the poison of sin's sorcery, and that is the leaves of the "tree of life," which grows on Calvary. — *Theodore Cuyler.*

II. When a bishop of Paris, in 1871, was brought before Raoul Rigault, one of the boldest of the communists, the venerable ecclesiastic, addressing his accusers, said, "Children, what do you wish to do with me?" — "We are your betters," said Rigault, who was

hardly thirty years of age. "Speak as if to your superiors. Who are you?" The bishop, whose charities had been known in Paris for a generation, replied, "I am the servant of God."—"Where does he live?" asked Rigault. "Everywhere," was the answer. "Very well," said the communist: "send this bishop to prison, and issue an order for the arrest of one God, who lives everywhere." That order was never executed; but, until God can be arrested, communism [or any sin] cannot succeed.—*Joseph Cook.*

III. A burglar, not long ago, rifled an unoccupied dwelling by the seaside. He ransacked the rooms, and heaped his plunder in the parlor. There were evidences that here he sat down to rest. On a bracket in the corner stood a marble bust of Guido's "Ecce Homo,"—Christ crowned with thorns. The guilty man had taken it in his hands, and examined it. It bore the marks of his fingers; but he replaced it *with its face turned to the wall*, as if he would not have even the sightless eyes of the marble Saviour look upon his deed of infamy. So the first act of the first sinner was to hide himself at the sound of God's voice.—*Professor Phelps.*

PRACTICAL.

1. God has placed us in a world full of blessings and enjoyments.
2. But yet life is restricted and limited; near each enjoyment is the forbidden tree.
3. Thus life becomes a probation and a test; not to make us fall, but to make us stronger and better.
4. To eat of the forbidden tree is death to body and soul.
5. The root of sin is unbelief; therefore the root of salvation is faith in God.
6. The sinner is afraid of God, and would hide from him.
7. God seeks after man that is lost.
8. Sin is degrading, base, sensual.
9. Good and evil are in perpetual enmity; evil may injure good, but good will at last destroy evil.

LESSON III.—JULY 18, 1880.

CAIN AND ABEL.—GEN. 4: 3-15.

TIME.—About B.C. 3875, 125 or 130 years after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Somewhere in Eden, outside of the garden.

CAIN AND ABEL.—Probably the first two children of Adam and Eve. **CAIN** means *possession*; and Eve seems to have believed this was the promised "seed," the deliverer. **ABEL** means *breath, transitoriness*, a name expressive of her disappointment of her maternal hopes, or of her sense of her fallen condition.—Perhaps it was prophetic of the shortness of his life. Here also began **DIVISION OF LABOR**; *Abel* being a shepherd, and *Cain* a farmer, the beginnings of the *pastoral* and the *agricultural* modes of life.

EARLY POPULATION.—There are two prevalent notions connected with the era of the death of Abel, both of which are doubtless wrong. One is, that Cain and Abel were both young men, some 20 or 30 years of age. But they were not less than 125 years of age when that dreadful event took place; but it is yet true that they were young. When the life of man reached to nearly 1,000 years, an age like this was youthful. The other is, that, besides their parents, Cain and Abel were the only persons in the world, or, at most, that there were besides merely their wives, and perhaps a few young children of theirs. But the fact that so many years had passed would alone render improbable what might have seemed likely under the notion that but a few years had elapsed. We have seen a calculation in Saurin's *Dissertations*, which makes it out that at the time of the death of Abel (A.M. 128), there might have been 32,768 persons descended from eight children of Cain and Abel, born before A.M. 25,—or over 400,000 men (not counting women) in all. There is an old tradition, that Cain and Abel had respectively twin sisters, and that the twin of Cain became the bride of Abel, and the twin of Abel the bride of Cain. She who was born with Cain is, in Arabian tradition, called Achima, and she born with Abel, Lebuda; but the Oriental Christians know them as Azrun and Ovain.—*Kitto.* Kitto discredits Saurin's calculations. But he only shows not what actually was, but what was possible. And a very simple calculation will show that from Adam and Eve there might have descended a large population in 130 years.

3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought¹ of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4. And Abel, he also brought¹ of

the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat² thereof. And the LORD had respect³ unto Abel, and to his offering:

5. But unto Cain, and to his offer-

¹ Num. 18:12. ² Lev. 3:16, 17. ³ Heb. 11:4.

INTRODUCTION.

We now come to some of the consequences of Adam's sin, a development of the great world-long conflict between the good and evil. Sin was bringing forth its evil fruit, and faith in God was also being strengthened by the conflict.

EXPLANATORY.

3. In process of time. Literally, at the end of the days. It is doubted whether this refers to the end of the week or of the year, — to the *sabbath*, or to the time of ingathering. More likely this phrase denotes the sabbath, *the end of the week-days*. And, since its formal institution by God in Paradise, it was doubtless kept holy by such appointments of worship as would distinguish the day. — *Jacobus*. Probably, *at the end of the year*, the time at which the feast of the ingathering was afterwards kept (Exod. 23:16). — *Bush*. *Keil* makes it simply "After a considerable lapse of time," and Lange includes both. Cain. See Introduction. Fruit of the ground, an offering. Fruits, grain; the word "offering" here is often translated "meat-offering" (Lev. 11:1) or "thank-offering," expressing gratitude, but not any sense of sin, and the need of forgiveness. The worse men are, except in some special trouble, the less do they feel a sense of sinfulness, and need of forgiveness. It is also not said that he offers the *best*, as did Abel.

4. Abel. See Introduction. Firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. That is, the choicest [and fattest] of the first-born lambs or kids. — *William Smith*. What strikes us first is the remarkable fact of the existence of sacrifice at this early period, so soon after the fall. This implies further communications of God's will to man than we have as yet been distinctly acquainted with. The usage of sacrifice — the idea that the life-blood of an animal could be an acceptable offering to God — could hardly have arisen in this early and unbloody age without a special intimation of some kind from heaven. Some idea of its meaning must have been afforded, that it might seem reasonable and proper; and that explanation could have been only one, — that man was a sinner; that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin; that although, indeed, the blood of animals could not take away sin, yet that thereby they could declare their guiltiness before God, and express their faith and hope in the atonement thereafter to be offered by "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." — *Kitts*. The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering. That is, kindly and favorably regarded, had complacency in. Chal., "He accepted with good will Abel and his gifts." As the apostle (Heb. 11:4) informs us that God testified his approbation of Abel's offering, it is reasonable to suppose that this was done by the visible token of fire from heaven consuming it upon the altar. Theodotion renders it *kindled* or *set on fire*; upon which Jerome remarks, "How could Cain know that God accepted his brother's offering, and rejected his own, unless the translation which Theodotion has given be the true one?" If it were not by this particular token that Abel understood that God was propitious to him, it must have been by some other equally indubitable. — *Bush*.

5. Unto Cain, . . . he had not respect. Why was there this difference? (1) The apostle (Heb. 11:4) tells us, that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice (Gr., *πλεονα θυσιαν*) than Cain," or, as Wickliff's translation with more literal exactness renders it, "a much more sacrifice," i.e., a more full or complete sacrifice. Here, by declaring the offering of Abel to have been made by faith, the writer teaches by necessary implication that Cain's offering was *not* made by faith; and hence undoubtedly it is, that the sacrifice of Abel is said to have been more *full, complete, and excellent* than Cain's. — *Bush*. (2) This was manifested in his works. John (1 John 3:12), evidently referring to this offering, plainly states that Cain's works were evil and his brother's righteous. It was probably some commemorative day, in which a sacrifice of atonement was expected and usually rendered. That Cain refused to render this service, but brought his vegetable products, in which he may be presumed to have taken much pride — as if an acknowledg-

ing, he had not respect: and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well,¹ sin lieth at the door: and

unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew² him.

9. ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain,³ Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he

¹ 1 John 3:12. ² 1 John 3:12. Jude 11. ³ Ps. 9:12.

ment of the Lord's goodness in the bounties of nature was all that could be drawn from him. — *Kitto*. (3) There was a difference in the *character of the men*, as we see in what follows, and also in the narrative, — "*Abel and his offering*," "*Cain and his offering*." The difference was in faith. Just as in the last lesson we found unbelief to be the root of sin, so here we find *faith* to be the foundation of salvation. It may be that the way in which Abel's faith showed itself was in bringing the offering prescribed. — *Gibson*. Cain was wroth. Heb., "It burned Cain sore." — *Keil*. His countenance fell. He scowled, and hung his head, as men do in displeasure. — *Alford*.

7. If thou doest well, &c. If thou doest well (or, "if thou offerest aught" LXX.), is there not an elevation of the countenance (i.e., "*cheerfulness, happiness*"); but, if thou doest not well, *there is a sinking of the countenance*; sin lurketh (as a wild beast) at the door, "and to thee is its desire," — it seeks the mastery over you; "but thou art to rule over it," — to resist and subdue it. — *Smith*. Sin lieth at the door. Heb., *croucheth*. That is, the guilt and punishment of sin await thee; shall follow close upon thy transgression; it shall be like a fierce mastiff or furious beast of prey *crouching*, as it were, at the very door of thy house, to seize upon thee unawares. By enclosing these words in a parenthesis, a far more clear and satisfactory view of the coherency of the verse is obtained, and the common but somewhat forced version, "a sin-offering," rendered unnecessary. The sense of the passage, then, may be given thus: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not enjoy the appointed pre-eminence? (but, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door) and unto thee shall be his obsequious respect, and thou shalt rule over him." — *Bush*. The Hebrew word means in many places a *sin-offering*, that is, an animal victim; and, that being understood here, the words will admit, and we incline to think that they require, a signification which may be thus paraphrastically expressed: "If thou doest not well, lo, there now lieth at thy very door a lamb, by offering which for thy sin thou mayest acceptably express thy contrition, and obtain forgiveness." — *Kitto*. Unto thee shall be (is) his desire. Either Abel's to his brother, as the elder, and holding the birthright, so that the promise is that Cain should hold his natural position in the family if he did well; or, as in *Smith* above, the desire of *sin* is toward him, but Cain shall rule over it. So *Kalisch*, *Knobel*, and *Keil*.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother. Heb., "And Cain said unto Abel his brother;" after which there is, in many of the Hebrew copies, a blank space left, as if something had been omitted. The meaning probably is that Cain dissembled his hatred, conversing freely and familiarly with his brother, till an opportunity occurred of executing his murderous purpose. — *Bush*. And slew him. It is uncertain whether the words "Cain talked with Abel" imply a treacherous snare, or a quarrel which led on to the fatal deed. In any case, Cain's rage at his brother's being preferred to him was its true cause. For, fearful as is the truth that the first overt act of sin after the fall was a brother's murder, He who knew what was in man has testified that "whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause" has already broken the spirit of the Sixth Commandment (Matt. 5:22), and that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3:15). This truth is confirmed by all history. — *Smith*. Cain was the first man who let sin reign in him. In him the seed of the woman became the seed of the serpent. — *Keil*. And wherefore slew he him? Because *his own works were evil*, and *his brother's righteous*. We see here the jealousy and hatred with which wicked men regard the virtue that condemns them, and which vents itself in persecution. Accordingly Abel is named by our Saviour as the first of the noble army of martyrs. — *Smith*.

9. I know not. The current Moslem tradition is founded on a Jewish one, which states that "Cain was not aware of the Lord's knowledge of hidden things: he therefore

said, I know not: *Am I my brother's keeper?*

10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood¹ crieth unto me from the ground.

11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.

12. When thou tillest the ground,

it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall

¹ Heb. 12:24. Rev. 6:10.

buried Abel, and met the inquiry, 'Where is Abel thy brother?' by the bold question, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Am I my brother's keeper? Only Cain-like men can ask Cain's question. We all are our brothers' keepers. God has made the circles of family, friendship, acquaintance, race, humanity, so that each of us has an influence in them, and we are responsible for that influence. No one lives or dies to himself. And God gives us wealth, position, intellect, not for ourselves alone, but that we may be better keepers of our brother.

10. The voice of thy brother's blood crieth. The verb "crieth" agrees with blood, which is in the plural (drops of blood). Murder is a crime which cries to heaven for vengeance; and, though the blood may be hidden, the voice cannot be silenced. — *Cook*. No power in earth can silence the voice that demands the punishment of sin.

11. Cursed from the earth. Either (1) My curse shall smite thee from the land, i.e., the curse shall come from the land, by its barrenness (*Kimchi* and others); or (2) Cursed away from this district (land), i.e., driven forth by the curse (*Gerlach, Delitsch*); or (3) Cursed more than the earth was for Adam's sin. — *Lange*. Opened her mouth, &c. It is because the earth has been compelled to drink innocent blood, therefore it opposes itself to the murderer, and refuses to yield its fruits to his cultivation. — *Keil*.

12. The ground . . . not yield . . . her strength. Upon Cain the curse is, that though he should till the ground, yet, in a kind of revenge, it would refuse to yield to him her strength, and so he should roam from place to place, all along reminded in his daily living, and by his fruitless labors, of his dreadful crime. Meanwhile he should carry about with him the materials of his own torture in a guilty conscience, such as a murderer alone can know. — *Jacobus*. In the case of the first murderer, God designed to furnish a singular example of malediction, which should remain in all ages. — *Calvin*. A fugitive. Heb., a wanderer and a fugitive. Roaming about unsettled, and flying from the face of man. The very ground turned against him, he would be homeless; and, his conscience condemning him, he would flee even when no man pursued. — *Jacobus*.

13. My punishment is greater than I can bear. The word for punishment also means sin. It may mean (1) my punishment is unendurable, or (2) my sin is too great to be forgiven. *Lange* suggests that both senses are true and united: the sin was acknowledged, but only in view of punishment. The self-accusation is at the same time an accusation of the Judge, — "the sorrow of the world that worketh death."

14. From the face of the earth. The land, the home of his childhood and his fathers. From thy face shall I be hid. That is, from the place of God's special presence, from the seat of his worship, from the habitation of his shechinah, from the society of his father and family, and consequently from the only church which God then had upon earth. It was therefore a virtual excommunication from the highest religious privileges which could then be enjoyed. If this be the import of the words (and we know of none so probable), it bears a very favorable appearance with respect to the state of things in Adam's family. It implies that the worship of God was there kept up, and that God was with them. — *Bush*. Every one that findeth me shall slay me. There may have been already many people in the world, and would be many more before Cain died. — To the lawless, vindictive Cain, nothing would be more natural than the thought that somewhere in the unknown waste there might be beings like himself, and who might be as malignant to him as he had been to his slain brother. We may say too, that Cain's awful guilt gave a preternatural power to his imagination. When, in the *Eumenides* of *Eschylus*, *Orestes*

come to pass,¹ *that every one that findeth me shall slay me.*

15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain,

vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

¹ Job 15: 20-24. Prov. 28: 1.

sees the Furies everywhere pursuing him, we recognize it as dramatically true to nature. — *Taylor Lewis.*

15. Vengeance on him sevenfold. He shall be far more severely punished than Cain himself. The Lord also set a mark upon Cain. Or, Heb., "The Lord appointed a sign to Cain." The original word here employed (סֶמֶל *oth*) often signifies a *sign, token, or memorial* by which something is confirmed or brought to remembrance. The *sign* here said to be appointed to Cain is undoubtedly to be understood in the same manner. It was some kind of *notification* to him, perhaps by a sensible miracle, of the truth of the promise respecting his personal safety. As to its being a visible mark, brand, or stigma affixed to his person, there is no ground whatever for such an opinion. He was suffered to live in order to be a warning to others of the direful effects of giving way to malignant passions, and as a living monument of the power of a guilty conscience. God is not obliged to send a sinner to the place of the damned in order to punish him. — *Fuller.* The divine forbearance, moreover, by thus prolonging his life graciously afforded him space for repentance. — *Bush.* God put, placed, imposed it to him (Dan. 1 : 7). What this mark was, we cannot say, and it is idle to conjecture. *Calvin* says, "It may suffice us that there was some visible token which should repress in the spectators the desire and the audacity to inflict injury." The terms clearly indicate this. And this would also seem part of the plan, that, while this mark should be Cain's brand as a murderer, it would be God's mark of his protection from others who would murder him in a natural retaliation, and thus it would express God's vengeance against the awful crime as reserved to himself. This sign is held by many to have been a wild ferocity of aspect, that made every one shrink from him. — *Jacobus.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Gibson's *Ages before Moses*; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; and excellent illustrations in Scott's "Marmion"; in E. E. Hale's "Man without a Country"; in Shakspeare's "Macbeth," and "Richard III." "Story of Orestes," in *Æschylus*, p. 128, of *Ancient Classics for English Readers*. Sermons on "My Brother's Keeper," by Cumming, D. O. Clark, N. S. S. Beman (N. P. 21), Jos. McKee (N. P. 30), A. Paine (N. P. 31).

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. In front of an old ruined abbey in a secluded glen in Europe there is a stone statue of a headless man, holding in a plate in his hand his own head. It is the statue of the martyr John the Baptist. One of the story-writers of France has represented the cruel and revengeful daughter of Herodias, who asked such fiendish pay for dancing, as put under the same curse as the "wandering Jew" of Jerusalem, doomed to live and wander for centuries without growing old or hoping to rest or die, hearing ever the cry behind her, "Go on, go on." After eighteen centuries of weary wandering, she comes at last, by accident, to the foot of this statue, and sees in the dead face a look of sympathy and pity. As she glances into the spring at her side, she perceives with unspeakable joy that she is rapidly growing old, and almost in a moment her hair has turned white. She can now hope for pardon and the longed-for rest of death. This legend is but a picture of the remorse of unpardoned sin following us for centuries in this world and the other. Only the pardon of Christ can give such a heart hope and rest. — *W. F. Crafts.*

II. Hood's poem, "Eugene Aram," represents this man, a school-teacher, as having murdered a man. After that he could not look in the faces of the innocent children. He buried the body, but had to take it up; he plunged it in a stream, but the stream ran dry; he covered it with leaves, but the wind blew them away.

"I knew my secret then was one
The earth refused to keep,
Or land or sea, though he should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

And lo! the universal air
Seemed lit with ghastly flame;
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame."

A true picture, not only of murder, but of all sin in the end. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Obedience is better than sacrifice.
2. Unbelief, that led to self-will, was the root of Cain's fall.
3. Faith, that obeys and loves, makes our good works acceptable.
4. Character shows itself in all we do.
5. Bad men envy and hate the good, on account of their receiving God's favor, which at the same time they themselves might have if they would do right.
6. Sin is always near, seeking to destroy us.
7. Anger is murder in heart, and often leads to murder in fact.
8. Lying follows in the train of other sins.
9. Sin never lets us rest, but forever cries out against us.
10. We are our brother's keeper, and are responsible for all we can do to help him.
11. Sin ruins society, agriculture, business, brings trouble and loss of profit everywhere.
12. The punishment of sin will in the end seem greater than we can bear.

LESSON IV.—JULY 25, 1880.

THE COVENANT WITH NOAH.—GEN. 9: 8-19.

TIME.—B. C. 2348 (i.e., A. M. 1656), just after the flood. More than 1500 years after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Somewhere on the mountains of Ararat, which extend through Armenia to the south-west. It is not the high peak now called Ararat, but the mountainous region known as Ararat. Lenormant and George Smith place it still farther east and south, in the Hindoo Koosh, another part of the same range.

DATE OF THE DELUGE.—B. C. 2349-8, or 1655-6 years after the creation of man, according to the common chronology. The Septuagint places it 3270 years before Christ, and the creation at B. C. 5512. It is possible that the formation of the distinct early races may compel us to adopt the longer chronology; but as yet nothing discovered is necessarily inconsistent with the common date. It is a curious confirmation of this, that, as even Bunsen acknowledges, there are no writings or monumental inscriptions of any kind dating back of the common date of the deluge, B. C. 2348; and no human monuments dating earlier than B. C. 4004, the common date of the creation. So Burgess, p. 144.

EXTENT OF THE DELUGE.—Whether the flood was universal or partial, has given rise to much controversy; but there can be no doubt that it was universal, so far as man was concerned: we mean, that it extended to all *the then known world*. The literal truth of the narration obliges us to believe that *the whole human race*, except eight persons, perished by the waters of the flood. But the language of the Book of Genesis does not compel us to suppose that the whole surface of the globe was actually covered with water.—*Smith*. If we carefully consider the nature of the narrative, we shall surely be led to conclude that the deluge is described from the point of view of an eye-witness, not from the point of view of the Omnipotent. That merely is related which actually appeared. The deluge described in Genesis is pictured as it would have presented itself to the eyes of Noah and his family. It is in the highest degree probable that the description is really that which was given by one of such eye-witnesses. The words may certainly mean that the deluge was universal over the whole extent of the world. Yet, if only the inhabited world was inundated, the effect would have been the same to Noah, and would most likely have been described in the same words.—*Cook*. Tayler Lewis deduces "the partial extent of the flood from the very face of the Hebrew text." "Earth," where it speaks of "all the earth," often is, and here should be, translated "land," the home of the race, from which there appears to have been little inclination to wander. Even after the flood God had to *compel* them to disperse. "Under the whole heavens" simply includes the horizon reaching around "all the land;" the visible horizon. We still use the words in the same sense, and so does the Bible. Nearly all commentators now agree on the partial extent of the deluge. It is probable also that the crimes and violence of the previous age had greatly diminished the population, and that they would have utterly exterminated the race, had not God in this way saved out some good seed from their destruction. So that the flood, by appearing to destroy the race, really saved the world from destruction.—*P*.

THE SCENE OF THE DELUGE.—There is a remarkable portion of the globe, chiefly on the Asiatic Continent, though it extends into Europe, and which is nearly equal to all Europe in extent; whose rivers (some of them the Volga, Oural, Sihon, Kour, and the Amoo, of great size) do not fall into the ocean, but, on the contrary, are all *turned inwards*, losing themselves, in the eastern part of the tract, in the lakes of a rainless district; in the western parts, into such seas as the Caspian and the Aral. In this region there are extensive districts still under the level of the ocean. Vast plains, white with salt, and charged with sea-shells, show that the Caspian Sea was, at no distant period, greatly more extensive than it is now. With the well-known facts, then, before us, regarding this depressed Asiatic region, let us suppose that the human family, still amounting to several millions, though greatly reduced by exterminating wars and exhausting vices, were congregated in that tract of country, which, extending eastwards from the modern Ararat to far beyond the Sea of Aral, includes the original Caucasian centre of the race. Let us suppose that, the hour of judgment having arrived, the land began gradually to sink (as the tract in the Run of Cutch sank in the year 1819) equally for 40 days at the rate of about 400 feet per day, — a rate not twice greater than that at which the tide rises in the Straits of Magellan, and which would have rendered itself apparent as but a persistent inward flowing of the sea. The depression, which, by extending to the Euxine Sea and the Persian Gulf on the one hand and the Gulf of Finland on the other, would open up by three separate channels the “fountains of the great deep,” and which included an area of 2,000 miles each way, would, at the end of the fortieth day, be sunk in its centre to the depth of 1,600 feet, — sufficient to bury the loftiest mountains of the district; and yet, having a gradient of declination of but 16 feet per mile, the contour of its hills and plains would remain apparently what they had been before, and the doomed inhabitants would see but the water rising along the mountain sides, and one refuge after another swept away.

— *Hugh Miller, Testimony of the Rocks.*

TRADITIONS OF THE DELUGE.—The narrative of the deluge is a universal tradition, pervading all branches of the human family excepting the black race. It cannot possibly be a myth. It must of necessity be the recollection of a real terrible event. — *Lenormant*. So great is the agreement, so universal is the tradition, that they must refer to the same event in one place, but carried with the people all over the world.

THE ARK AND ITS CONTENTS.—This “chest,” or “boat,” was to be made of gopher (i.e., cypress) wood, a kind of timber which, both for its lightness and its durability, was employed by the Phenicians for building their vessels. Means for the admission of light were provided. If the words “unto a cubit shalt thou finish it *above*” refer to the window, and not to the ark itself, they seem to imply that this aperture or skylight extended to the breadth of a cubit the whole length of the roof. It was to be 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height. Taking 21 inches for the cubit, the ark would be 525 feet in length, 87 feet 6 inches in breadth, and 52 feet 6 inches in height. This is very considerably larger than the largest British man-of-war. It should be remembered that this huge structure was only intended to float on the water, and was not in the proper sense of the word a ship. It had neither mast, sail, nor rudder; it was, in fact, nothing but an enormous floating house, or oblong box rather. — *Smith*. The method of speaking of the animals that were taken into the ark, “clean and unclean,” implies that only those which were useful to man were preserved, and that no wild animals were taken into the ark; so that there is no difficulty from the great number of different species of animal life existing in the world.

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|---|--|
| 8. ¶ And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, | covenant with you, and with your seed after you; |
| 9. And I, behold, I establish ¹ my | 10. And ² with every living creature |

¹ Vers. 11, 17. Chap. 6:18. ² Chap. 8:1. Ps. 145:9.

EXPLANATORY.

8. **And God spake.** After they had disembarked from the ark. **Noah.** The son of Lamech. The tenth generation from Adam, in the line of the sons of God. He was born B.C. 2948; died B.C. 1998. The name of NOAH is very significant. It means *rest*, or *comfort*, and his father gave it by prophetic inspiration. **His sons.** Shem, Ham, Japheth.

9. **Establish my covenant;** that is, one of these *agreements* by which he had condescended again and again to bind himself toward man; not more sacred with him than a simple promise, but more satisfying to the weakness of our faith. Of these covenants,

that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

11. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood¹ to destroy the earth.

12. And God said, This *is* the token² of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations.

13. I do set my bow³ in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

15. And⁴ I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you; and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember⁵ the everlasting cove-

¹ 2 Pet. 3:7. ² Chap. 17:11. ³ Ezek. 1:28. Rev. 4:3; 10:1. ⁴ Lev. 26:42, 45. Deut. 7:9. 1 Kings 8:23. ⁵ Chap. 17:13, 19. 2 Sam. 23:5. Isa. 55:3. Heb. 13:20.

that made with Noah on behalf of his descendants is the first; and it may be called the *covenant of God's forbearance*, under which man lives to the end of time. It repeated the promise that the world should not be again destroyed by a flood; and it was ratified by the beautiful sign of the rainbow in the cloud, a *natural* phenomenon suited to the *natural laws*, of whose permanence it was the token. — *William Smith*. Establish it; lit., make it stand. *My covenant*. The old covenant, past as well as future. It is the old covenant of salvation in all its fulness, with the negative addition, "neither shall there any more be a flood." — *Gibson*. And this addition but confirms the promise of a *deliverer given to Adam*. Seed. Descendants.

10. From all that go out of the ark, to every beast. This covenant promise extends to the animals who went out of the ark with Noah, and through them to every beast of the earth after them. — *Jacobus*.

11. By referring to chap. 6: 13, it appears that there was a twofold threatening: viz. against "all flesh," and against "the earth:" so here is a corresponding twofold promise. — *Bush*.

13. I do set my bow . . . it shall be for a token. Even in English the tenses of the two clauses are different, but in the original it is still more marked; for the tense of the first is past, and of the second is future. "I have set," and "it shall be." The bow was set in time past; and in the future it shall be a token of the covenant. — *Gibson*. The literal rendering is, "I do appoint my bow in the cloud;" and the very expression shows that the rainbow must have existed prior to the flood, though it was subsequent to the flood that it became a symbol, or sign, to denote that the world should never again be overflowed. If there were raindrops and sunbeams before the flood, there must have been rainbows, because the rainbow is produced by the refraction of the rays of light from the drops of water which fall in a shower. But the Bible does not assert that God created the rainbow immediately after the flood, but that he then applied it to this special use. — *Dr. Cumming*.

14-16. When, in the common course of things, I bring a cloud over the earth, under certain circumstances I do set my bow in it. That bow shall be from henceforth a token of the covenant I now make with you to drown the earth no more by a flood. Look upon it, and remember this covenant. As certainly as the bow is formed by the operation of physical causes in the cloud, and as long as it continues to be thus formed, so certainly and so long shall my covenant endure, standing fast for evermore, as this faithful witness in heaven. — *Bishop Horne*. The rainbow is thus an index that the sky is not wholly overcast, since the sun is shining through the shower, and thereby demonstrating its partial extent. There could not, therefore, be a more beautiful or fitting token that there shall be no more a flood to sweep away all flesh and destroy the land. It comes with its mild radiance only when the cloud condenses into a shower. It consists of heavenly light, variegated in hue, and mellowed in lustre, filling the beholder with an involuntary pleasure. It forms a perfect arch, extends as far as the shower extends, connects heaven and earth, and spans the horizon. In these respects it is a beautiful emblem of mercy rejoicing against judgment, of light from heaven irradiating and beatifying the soul, of grace

nant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

17. And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

18. ¶ And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth : and Ham¹ *is* the father of Canaan.

19. These *are* the three sons of Noah, and of them² was the whole earth overspread.

¹ Chap. 10 : 1, 6. ² Chap. 10 : 32. 1 Chron. 1 : 4.

always sufficient for the need of the re-union of earth and heaven, and of the universality of the offer of salvation. — *Murphy*.

17. This is the token of the covenant. God seems here to direct Noah's attention to a rainbow actually existing at the time in the sky, and presenting to the patriarch the assurance of the promise, with all the impressiveness of reality.

18, 19. The names of these brothers, like that of Noah, are significant. *Shem* means *name, fame, renown*; *Ham* signifies *heat, sun-burned*; *Japheth* means *enlargement, or spreading*. Though *Japheth* was the eldest, *Shem* is named first, as having the birthright and the blessing of the Messianic line. *Shem* is so named, as being most exalted; *Ham*, perhaps, as occupying afterwards the torrid regions; *Japheth* (spreading), as father of the largest portion of the human family; Celtic, Persian, Grecian, and German occupying the northern part of Asia, and all of Europe. — *Bush*. Speaking in general terms, it may be said, that the three sons of Noah — Shem, Ham, and Japheth — are the representatives of the three grand divisions of the earth, — Asia, Africa, and Europe, — although not precisely according to the boundaries of modern times. The descendants of Japheth peopled Europe and the north-west of Asia; those of Ham, the southern quarter of the globe, particularly Africa; and the Shemites, the countries of Central Asia, particularly those around the Euphrates. — *Jacobus*. In the science of languages, Max Müller reduces all languages to three families. The science of ethnology points to the same three divisions. — This remarkable record of the birth of the great nations of antiquity is perfectly sustained by the universal history of all subsequent ages. All historic science does it homage. The science of ethnography begins with this chapter (Gen. 10) of inspiration.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On the deluge, perhaps the best help is Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks*, two chapters on "The Noachian Deluge" (also Tayler Lewis in Lange's *Commentary*). Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, vol. i., takes the other side as to its universality, but is excellent on the traditions of the deluge. See, also, Gibson's *Ages before Moses*; George Smith's *Chaldean Account of Genesis*; Lenormant and Chevalier, *Ancient History of the East*. On the last two verses, see Burgess's *The Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The famous tradition of Deucalion's deluge, as preserved among the Greeks, has the closest coincidence with that of Noah, so that the accounts which we possess seem to read like amplified reports of the record in Genesis. Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, who was well acquainted with both sacred and pagan literature, plainly affirms that Deucalion was Noah; and of this there can be no question. We have two accounts of this deluge, — one by Lucian, and another by Ovid. According to Lucian, there was another race of men before the present which owes its origin to Deucalion. The first race of men were a fierce and haughty people, who committed most heinous iniquities. For this a horrible calamity came over them. All at once the waters burst forth from all parts of the earth, and floods of rain came down from above, till the earth was covered with water, and all mankind perished. Deucalion alone was preserved, on account of his piety and uprightness, for the propagation of a new race. He had a very large chest, into which he packed his wives and children, and last of all went in himself. Just as he was entering, there came running to him all kinds of wild beasts and creeping things, *pair-wise*. He took them all in; and Jupiter instilled into them such peaceful dispositions that they did him no harm, but lived in the most peaceful accord together, and were thus preserved in the chest as in a ship so long as the flood lasted. The chief variation in Ovid's description of the same deluge is, that Deucalion and his wife (not wives and children, nor animals) escape the flood in a small skiff, which is stranded upon Mount Parnassus. — *Kitto*.

II. God's *covenants* are written on nature as well as in his word, and the two always agree. Men will never be able to uproot the belief in God's future punishment of sin, no matter how much they deny it, because it is written on nature itself. President Eliot of Harvard College said, last summer, to the Massachusetts Medical Society, "The fear of hell-fire and the undying worm do not have such a strong restraining influence as they once did. Science, and particularly medical science, was supplying a substitute for that influence, and he thought the members of the profession should dwell upon what might be called the scientific, demonstrable, evil consequences of sin. They could drive this lesson home as no other profession could." Instead of a substitute, science is enforcing the truth of God's word. Men mocked at Noah, but the flood came. And mocking at the threatened punishments for sin will never keep them off a single day. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. God punishes men, not because he hates them, but because he loves them. For without punishment *all* would be ruined by sin.
2. He gives men abundant time, opportunity, and influences for repentance.
3. He prepares an ark of salvation, even Jesus Christ.
4. Those saved in the ark do not rest satisfied with their own salvation, but by word and life preach righteousness, to persuade all to come.
5. Those who refuse to enter are lost without remedy.
6. There is a "too late," when there is no more room for salvation.
7. Faith, that leads us to obey, is the condition of salvation.
8. Those who deny that there is any future punishment, and thus soothe men in their sins, are the cruel ones, — not those who warn and entreat.
9. God always keeps his covenants: they are eternal.
10. God writes his covenants on nature, as well as in his word, that none may fail to know them.
11. God sets his rainbow of mercy and love on every storm of sorrow, or trouble, or sin.

LESSON V.—AUGUST 1, 1880.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.—GEN. 11: 31, 32; 12: 1-10.

TIME.—The patriarch whom God made the head of his chosen family was born only two years after the death of Noah (B. C. 1996). He left Ur his home, B. C. 1926, remained in Haran five years, and departs thence for Canaan B. C. 1921, aged 75. To-day's lesson extends from B. C. 1926-1920. 420 years after our last lesson.

PLACES.—He was born in *Ur*, the most important of the early capitals of Chaldea. Thence he went to *Haran*, in Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Belik, a branch of the Euphrates, now a small village; thence to the land of Canaan, i.e., Palestine.

ABRAHAM (father of a multitude), changed from Abram (high or exalted father). — Youngest son of Terah, founder of the Jewish nation; a native of Chaldea, where he lived for 70 years. Then he was called of God to leave his home, and he spent nearly 100 years in Canaan, dying at the age of 175, B. C. 1822.

INTRODUCTION.

After the flood, the sacred narrative rapidly conducts us to the man, the history of whose descendants—their sins, their sorrows, their excellences, their rewards, and their punishments—forms the great theme of the remainder of the Old Testament. It seems that in ten generations after the flood, mankind had again corrupted its way, and had fallen very far into forgetfulness of God. Yet God would not again destroy the earth for man's sake. The purpose of the Most High was to choose a man, and in him a family and a nation, to be his witness upon the earth, and the repository of ancient truths and of Messianic hopes, until the fulness of redeeming time should come. The person on whom this choice fell was Abraham (Abram), the son of Terah, of the line of Shem, whose native place was "Ur of the Chaldees." Besides Abraham, Terah had two other sons, Nahor and Haran. Haran, though named last in the sacred text, was plainly the eldest, as was Abraham the youngest of the three, although for dignity named first; for the

father was 70 years old when the first of his sons was born, but he was 130 years old at the birth of Abraham, seeing that his son was 75 years old (chap. 12: 4) when his father died at the age of 205. Haran, however, died prematurely, "before his father." He left two daughters, named Sarah and Milcah. The former became the wife of Abraham, and the other of his brother Nahor. The son, whose name was Lot, became famous from the connection of his history with that of Abraham. The great seniority of Haran is shown in the fact that his daughter Sarah, who became Abraham's wife, was but ten years younger than Abraham, and his son Lot seems to have been about the same age as the patriarch. — *Kitto*.

31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur¹ of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan;

and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

12: 1. Now the LORD had said

¹ Chap. 12: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

31. **And Terah.** The ninth of the patriarchs from Shem, and the nineteenth from Adam (inclusive). It is the more important to include the whole family of Terah in our view, as the call of God came to Abram while he was still living in the house of his father, to whose whole family, therefore, the call may be considered as in some sense addressed, and by all of whom it was in some degree obeyed. — *Smith*. It is painful to state, that there can be no doubt that the family of Terah was involved in the general idolatry of the age and country. This is expressly affirmed in Josh. 24: 2. — *Kitto*. **Took Abram.** From the deference paid to the head of a family, Terah is here represented as chief in the movement, though really acting in obedience to the monitions of his son (chap. 12: 1). — *Bush*. **Lot the son of Haran.** See Introduction. **Sarai his daughter-in-law.** Of Sarai's birth and parentage we have no certain knowledge in Scripture. Josephus, Jerome, and others suppose her to be the same with Iscah, ver. 29, the daughter of Haran (as *Kitto* in Introduction); but in chap. 20: 12, Abram says, "*She is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother.*" In Hebrew phrase the granddaughter is termed a daughter; and therefore this statement might be satisfied by her being the daughter of Haran, or she may have been the actual daughter of Terah by another wife. — *P*. **With them.** Terah and Abram went forth with Lot and the other companions of their journey. — *Murphy*. **Ur of the Chaldees.** Probably either: (1) the modern *Urfa* or *Oorfa*, the classic Edessa. This city is about 25 miles north of Haran. (2) Mugheir, on the west of the confluence of the Euphrates with the Tigris. The chief ground on which Sir H. Rawlinson identifies this site with Ur is from the name of Uruk or Hur, found on cylinders in the neighborhood. The cylinders, containing inscriptions, which were found among the ruins, are now in the British Museum. On one of the bricks was this inscription: "Orchamus, King of Ur, is he who has built the temple of the Moon-god." — *Whitney*. **The Chaldees** were, according to Rawlinson, a Cushite people whose empire was founded by Nimrod, B. C. 2286, in Chaldea proper, i.e., the region around the head of the Persian Gulf. **To go into the land of Canaan.** The country west of the Jordan, so called after one of the sons of Ham, generally considered equivalent to the land of Israel or Palestine. They simply confided themselves to the guidance of Heaven, resolving to go wherever a directing Providence should lead; and the historian, speaking as a historian, names the country, unknown to them, to which their journeyings tended. This information was afterwards given to Abraham, but at what precise time we know not. **They came unto Haran.** Haran has been generally identified with the Carræ of the Greeks and Romans, and the Harrân of the Arabs. This Harrân, of whose identification with Haran there is no reasonable doubt, stands on the banks of a small river called *Belik*, which flows into the Euphrates about 50 miles south of the town. — *Whitney*. **Came unto Haran, and dwelt there.** Probably on account of the increasing age and infirmities of Terah. — *Bush*.

32. **The days of Terah were two hundred and five.** Here Terah died after a residence of some years (as is clear from Gen. 12: 5); and here, charmed probably by the fertility of the country, and claiming the right of a first choice, Nahor settled. We

unto Abram, Get¹ thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee :

2. And I will make of thee a great

nation,² and I will bless thee, and make thy name great,³ and thou shalt be a blessing :

3. And I will bless⁴ them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth

¹ Acts 7:3. Heb. 11:8. Isa. 41:2. ² Chap. 17:6; 24:35. ³ Chap. 18:18; 28:4. ⁴ Num. 24:9.

shall find his family here in the next two generations, bearing a character suited to the motive thus suggested. — *Smith*.

12: 1. Now the Lord had said. Before he left Ur. The former chapter had carried the history down to the death of Terah. The present chapter returns to the date of the call of Abram. In Acts 7: 2, St. Stephen tells us, what also appears most likely from the history in Genesis, that God appeared to Abram "when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." — *Cook*. The call is probably now, after five years, repeated, and Abraham moves on to his destination. Unto Abram. A word compounded of *father* and *high*, importing a *high*, i.e., an eminent or distinguished, *progenitor* of a race. If the name were bestowed by his parents, which is perhaps doubtful, it was probably under the prompting of the spirit of prophecy. — *Bush*. Get thee out from thy country. Abraham is chosen to be the head of a new dispensation, as Noah was; but with this difference, that the world is not taken away this time, but only left out, left to walk in their own ways. But, while the world is not taken away from Abraham the coming man, Abraham the coming man is taken away from the world. Abraham and his descendants are to be separated to the life of faith and hope and holiness, separated to "walk with God." We shall find that God trained him by separation; by a series of separations. This is a key-thought of Abraham's life. — *Gibson*. From thy kindred . . . thy father's house. It was to sunder three ties, — country, kindred, and home, — and he was to go *by faith*. Here is illustrated the implicit and powerful faith of the patriarchs as it is presented in the New Testament. Dear to him as were his country and kindred and father's house, he was the more willing to go out at God's direction, for they were idolatrous. He is chosen as the founder of a new family, and a new order of things. — *Jacobus*. There is many a man called as Abram was, whose duty demands of him to quit the party with whom he has hitherto worked, to act again and again in such a way that those who have loved him will shrink from him; and, as it was with Abram and with Christ, he will find himself alone and solitary. There are many times when it must be so with us. — *Robertson*. Unto a land that I will show thee. He was to leave all, and to go he knew not whither. Had he been told it was to a land flowing with milk and honey, and that he should be put in possession of it, the trial to his faith would have been far less. But it was not so. That which was promised was not only promised in general terms, but was very *distant*. God did not even tell him he would *give* him the land, but merely *show* it to him. Nor did he in his lifetime obtain the possession of it. He was only a sojourner in it, without so much as a place to set his foot upon. — *Bush*.

2. I will make of thee a great nation. Observe the twofold nature of the promise given by God to Abram: it was partly temporal, partly spiritual. — *Robertson*. He should be the father of a great nation; not only by the vast multiplication of his natural seed, but by God's making them a select peculiar people, to be distinguished by signal favors above all nations. They should be the Lord's people. — *Bush*. The apostle says that all Christians are Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise. So that all Christian nations are part of the fulfilment of this promise. I will bless thee. The leading import of the divine blessing is an abundant increase or multiplication of favors, both temporal and spiritual. — *Bush*. Make thy name great. That is, as the divinely blessed ancestor and father of a renowned people. — *Knobel*. The name of the father of believers should shed its light and wield its influence through the world's history. — *Lange*. It is a remarkable fact, that perhaps no mere man has ever been so widely and so permanently honored. — *Bush*. Thou shalt be a blessing. A blessing in thyself, and a source of blessing to others. The promise has been abundantly fulfilled; for all the true blessedness which the world is now or shall be hereafter possessed of is owing instrumentally to Abraham and his posterity. Through them we have a Bible, a Saviour, and a gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian Church is grafted. Their very dispersions and punishments have proved the riches of the world. — *Bush*.

3. I will bless them that bless thee, &c. God promises further, so to take sides with Abram in the world, as to make common cause with him, — share his friendships, and treat his enemies as His own. This is the highest possible pledge. This threatening

thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.¹

4. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him, and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gath-

ered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and² into the land of Canaan they came.

6. ¶ And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem,³ unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite⁴ *was* then in the land.

7. And the LORD appeared⁵ unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will

¹ Ps. 72:17. Acts 3:25. Gal. 3:8. ² Heb. 11:8. ³ Deut. 11:30. Judg. 7:1. ⁴ Chap. 10:18, 19. ⁵ Chap. 17:1:18:1.

against hostile people was signally fulfilled. The Church is God's. Her enemies are his. Her friends are his also; and no weapon that is formed against her shall prosper, for He who has all power given unto him shall be with her faithful servants, even to the end of the world.—*Jacobus*. In thee . . . all families of the earth be blessed. This is Messianic. It looks to the world-wide benefits of redemption, which should come through Christ, the seed of Abram.—*Jacobus*. This promise was renewed to Abram on several occasions: chap. 13: 14-16, 18: 18; and lastly at the two principal turning-points of his life, viz., at chap. 17 and in chap. 22. The same promise was afterwards renewed to Isaac, chap. 26: 3, 4; and again to Jacob, chap. 28: 13, 14, and chap. 35: 11, 12.—*Keil*.

4. So Abram departed. This is the record of Abram's overcoming faith.

5. Abram took. Abram now leads the expedition, as Terah had done at the outstart as the father of the family. The relation of Sarai to Abram is here given, as well as that of Lot. All their substance. Heb., *all their gain which they had gained*, as sheep and goods. This includes all their substance, whether brought from Ur, or acquired in Haran.—*Jacobus*. (See Illustrative, I.) The souls they had gotten in Haran. The bond-servants they had acquired. Abram and Lot enter the land as men of substance. They are in a position of independence. The Lord is realizing to Abram the blessing promised.—*Murphy*. Into the land of Canaan they came. Leaving Haran, they must have crossed the river Euphrates, from which crossing it is very commonly supposed the name Hebrew was derived (*the crosser over*). Thence their course must have been southward over the desert, probably near to Mount Lebanon, and thence to the neighborhood of Damascus.—*Cook*.

6. And Abram passed through the land. Abram does not enter into immediate possession, but only travels through the land which the Lord had promised to *show* him. The place of Sichem, or Shechem. The town was probably not in existence.—Shechem was one of the oldest towns in Palestine, in a narrow valley between the mountains Gerizim and Ebal, about seven miles south of Samaria. In the New Testament the place is called Sychar (John 4: 5). Its present name is Nablous. Unto the plain (rather, "*the oak*") of Moreh. It was probably called Moreh from its planter or owner. The oak attains to great antiquity; and a single tree, well grown, becomes conspicuous for its grandeur and beauty, and was often chosen in ancient times as a meeting-place for religious rites.—*Murphy*. The Canaanite was then in the land. See chap. 13: 7; 34: 30. This notice was most probably added to show that the land was not empty at that time, but that the subsequent promise implied a displacement of inhabitants then in possession. This, of course, enhanced Abram's faith, and made his obedience more admirable.—*Alford*.

7. The Lord appeared unto Abram. Here for the first time this remarkable phrase occurs. It indicates that the Lord presents himself to the consciousness of man in any way suitable to his nature. It is not confined to the sight, but may refer to the hearing. The possibility of God appearing to man is undeniable. On the mode of his doing this, it is vain for us to speculate.—*Murphy*. Unto thy seed will I give this land. The Most High unfolds his counsels and promises gradually; rewarding one degree of faith with such intimations of mercy as will beget another. He at first signified his purpose of merely *showing* to Abraham a distant land in which he was to sojourn. He now speaks of *giving* it, but not immediately to himself, but to his seed; doubtless for a further trial of his faith. This promise is still further amplified in a subsequent chapter, chap. 15.—*Bush*. There builded he an altar unto the Lord. In token of his faith and gratitude, publicly

I give this land :¹ and there builded he an altar² unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el,³ and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east : and there he builded an altar unto the

LORD, and called⁴ upon the name of the LORD.

9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10. ¶ And there was a famine in the land : and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there ; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.

¹ Chap. 13:15; 17:8; 26:3; 28:13. ² Chap. 13:4, 18; 26:25; 33:20. ³ Chap. 28:19. ⁴ Chap. 21:33.

accepting thus God's grant to him, and openly taking possession of it in the name of his covenant God. — *Jacobus*. As he went along he erected altars to commemorate the mercies of God, and to remind his posterity that this was really their own land. Consider, then, what the land of Canaan became. Gradually it was dotted over with these stones, teaching the Israelites that it was a sacred land. What these stones did for the Israelites, our memory does for us : it brings back in review our past life. Blessed, thrice blessed, is the man to whom life is, as it was to Abram, dotted over with memorials of communion with God. — *Robertson*.

8. He removed from thence. Probably to secure the necessary pasture for his flocks. — *Keil*. Unto a mountain. A mountainous district, not to any one particular mountain. Having Beth-el on the west. Called Beth-el by anticipation ; the place being first so named by Jacob on his journey from Beer-sheba to Haran. Beth-el means "house of God." It is about 12 miles north of Jerusalem. — *Bush*. Hai on the east. Hai was about five miles to the east of Beth-el, the ruins of which bear the name of "Medinet Gai." Called upon the name of the Lord. He calls upon the divine name as "*Jehovah*," acknowledging the redemptive character and claims of God before his household. Though nothing is here stated of sacrificial offering, yet the building of an altar fairly implies this. — *Jacobus*.

9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. Heb., *broke up, going, and breaking up*; that is, advancing forwards by degrees ; now removing to one point, and now to another, according to the nomad custom, but, on the whole, moving on towards the south. — *Bush*.

10. There was a famine in the land. The part of Egypt which lay immediately south of Canaan appears to have been especially fertile. It was at that time inhabited by a people skilled in agriculture, and flooded periodically by the Nile. Egypt is still the refuge for neighboring nations when afflicted with drought. — *Cook*. To sojourn there. Not to live there ; for he had received the promise of inheritance in Canaan, and, though this famine may have tried, it did not shake, his faith. Here Abraham's faith was again tried in a peculiar way.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

H. C. Tompkins's *Studies in the Life of Abraham* ; Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. ; Smith's *Old Testament History* ; Gibson's *Ages before Moses*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Every English pilgrim to the Holy Land is delighted to trace the likeness of patriarchal manners and customs in the Arabian chiefs. The unchanged habits of the East render it in this respect a kind of living Pompeii. Such as we see them now, starting on a pilgrimage or a journey, were Abraham and his sister's son, when they "went forth" to go into the land of Canaan. "All their substance that they had gathered" is heaped high on the backs of their kneeling camels. Round about them are their flocks of sheep and goats, and the asses. The chief is there, marked out from the rest by his cloak of brilliant scarlet, by the fillet of rope which binds the loose handkerchief round his head, by the spear which he holds in his hand to guide the march and to fix the encampment. The chief's wife, the princess of the tribe, is there in her own tent to make the cakes, and prepare the usual meal of milk and butter. In every aspect, except that which most concerns us, the likeness is complete between the Bedouin chief of the present day and the Bedouin chief who came from Chaldea nearly 4,000 years ago, — in every aspect but one. The more we see the outward conformity of Abraham and his immediate descendants to

the godless, grasping, foul-mouthed Arabs of the modern desert, the more we shall recognize the force of the religious faith which has raised them from that low estate to be the heroes and saints of their people, the spiritual fathers of European religion and civilization. — *Stanley's "Jewish Church."*

II. A contrast. — A man must be in one of two positions: a servant of God, ready to do any thing and every thing at the call of God; or a defiant opponent of God, unwilling to admit God's supremacy in all things. In the one case the man is in the ever-brightening path of the just, with the certainty of final success; in the other he is on the high-road to ruin. The crime of Napoleon in divorcing Josephine has often been cited as an illustration of this truth; and it was never more forcibly presented than in the words of Emily Bliss Gould, quoted in her delightful memoir just written by Leonard W. Bacon. She views in the Louvre at Paris the relics of the great but wicked emperor. "Sad beyond description are the mementos of the King of Rome (Napoleon's son), — the gilt cradle, little cups and saucers, the bow and arrows, and the rest of his toys. For this child the father sacrificed his love and his honor, and brought upon himself the wrath of God. And how he was punished in the child, — an early, unhonored grave, a life without one promise, a death without one hope!" — *S. S. Times.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 31. God calls his children to be separate from the world.
2. Faith is proved by obeying God's calls, cost what it may.
3. We cannot at first see all to which God calls us; but it is from a land of idolatry and sin, to a promised land overflowing with good things.
4. Abraham's life shows us clearly how we are saved by faith.
5. Ver. 1. God's promises are abundant and glorious.
6. He that is truly blessed is ever a blessing to others.
7. Ver. 7. Wherever we go, we should establish the worship of God. It is a poor religion that will not go with us on our travels.
8. Abraham's journey is a type of life, — obedience to God's call, leaving the worldly life, a journey to the promised land, family worship, the institutions of religion, trials of our faith, famines at times, blessed in this world's blessings, sustained by God's promises.

LESSON VI. — AUGUST 8, 1880.

ABRAM AND LOT. — GEN. 13: 1-18.

TIME. — B. C. 1918, two or three years after last lesson.

PLACE. — Abram returns from Egypt to Canaan, near Bethel; Lot separates from him, and goes to Sodom; and then Abram settles at Hebron.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. — The leading kingdoms of the ancient world already founded and flourishing. Egypt was now under the shepherd kings. It was settled by the descendants of Ham. Phœnicia and Canaan settled by part of the descendants of Canaan. Tyre and Sidon built. Babylonia and Chaldea were founded by Nimrod nearly 400 years before this. The Greeks were said to be descendants of Javan, fourth son of Japheth.

CONNECTION. — In our last lesson we left Abraham in Egypt. Here the faith of Abram failed. To protect his wife from the license of a despot, he stooped to that mean form of deceit which is true in word but false in fact. He caused Sarai to pass as his sister. The trick defeated itself. Sarai, as an unmarried woman, was taken to the harem of the king, who heaped wealth and honors upon Abram. Warned of his mistake by plagues sent upon him and his household, the king restored Sarai to her husband, with a rebuke for his deceit, and sent him out of Egypt with all the wealth he had acquired, for he was now "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Abram travelled back through the south of Palestine to his old encampment near Bethel, where he again established the worship of Jehovah. — *Smith.*

1. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.¹

2. And Abram *was* very rich² in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai:

4. Unto the place of the altar,³

which he had⁴ made there at the first: and there Abram called⁵ on the name of the LORD.

5. ¶ And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6. And the land was not able⁶ to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and

¹ Chap. 12: 9, &c. ² Chap. 24: 35. ³ Sam. 2: 7. Job 1: 10. Ps. 112: 3. ⁴ Chap. 12: 7, 8. Ps. 42: 1, 2; 84: 10. ⁵ Ps. 116: 17; 145: 18. ⁶ Chap. 36: 7.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **Abram went up out of Egypt.** Palestine being a highland country, the entrance from Egypt by its southern boundary is a continual ascent. — *J. F. and B.* Into the south. To the southern part of Palestine. — This part of the land is elsewhere distinctly called the *south*, and the *south country*, Josh. 10: 40; 11: 16. — *Bush.*

2. **Abram was very rich.** He had grown rich in Egypt. He has now to experience some of the dangers and evils of prosperity. — *Cook.* An Arab sheik is considered rich who has 100 or 200 tents, from 60 to 100 camels, 1,000 sheep and goats respectively. And Abraham, being very rich, must have far exceeded that amount of pastoral property. — *J. F. and B.* In cattle. Long before this the Egyptian nobles took great pride in the rearing of cattle. We may be quite sure that no poor specimens were given by the Pharaoh to his friend. — *Studies on the Times of Abraham: Tompkins.* In silver. It is characteristic of early times, that silver is mentioned before gold among Abram's possessions, for it was very much more rare in Egypt, and was known as "white gold." In gold. When Abram was in Egypt gold was abundantly used; not only solid, molten, and graven, and in rings for currency, but beaten into thin plates for overlaying bronze, silver, wood, and stone. — *Tompkins.*

3. **He went on his journeys.** His progress would be by slow marches and frequent encampments, as he had to regulate his movements by the prospect of water and pasture. — *J. F. and B.* Between Bethel and Hai. "A conspicuous hill, its topmost summit resting on the rocky slopes below, and distinguished by its olive-groves, offering a natural base for the altar, and a fitting shade for the tent of the patriarch." — *Stanley.*

4. **Unto the place.** Chap. 12: 8. The narrative is careful to mention that he went directly to Bethel, where he had at the beginning pitched his tent, and builded an altar to God. It is the sanctuary of God, on God's own land, where He had already first revealed himself to him on the covenant soil. — *Jacobus.* Called on the name of the Lord. That is, re-established public worship, and again acted the part of a patriarchal missionary. — *Bush.* Doubtless he felt a strong desire to re-animate his faith and piety amidst the scenes of his former worship; it might be to express humility and penitence for his misconduct in Egypt, or thankfulness for deliverance from perils. — *Jamieson.* We have not read of the altar and the name of Jehovah in Egypt. Not that Abram would return to the abomination of idolatry, but we may reasonably think it fared not so well there with his soul's health. Doubtless Dean Stanley is right in saying that Egypt represented to him what we call the "world." And Abram had shaken off its dust from his feet, and returned to "a closer walk with God." — *Tompkins.*

5. **Lot also . . . had flocks and herds.** The blessing upon Abram overran and flowed over upon Lot. So God often showers his blessings upon the household, neighbors, and dependents of the righteous, for their sakes. **Tents.** This probably includes the occupants, — meaning servants and attendants. — *Jacobus.*

6. **And the land was not able to bear them; i.e., the land did not furnish space enough for the numerous herds to graze.** — *Keil.*

7. **There was a strife between the herdmen.** Originating, doubtless, in the increasing scarcity of herbage for the subsistence of their flocks, and in their eagerness for

the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt¹ then in the land.

8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife,² I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we *be* brethren.³

9. *Is* not the whole land⁴ before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left

hand, then I will go to the right: or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.⁵

10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed⁶ Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden⁷ of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.⁸

11. Then Lot chose him all the

¹ Chap. 34: 30. ² Phil. 2: 14. Heb. 12: 14. ³ Chap. 11: 27. ⁴ Chap. 20: 15. ⁵ 1 Pet. 3: 8-12. ⁶ Chap. 19: 25. ⁷ John 2: 15. ⁸ Chap. 2: 10. Isa. 51: 3. Joel 2: 3. ⁹ Chap. 14: 2.

the possession of the wells, or fountains of water, which in that rocky arid region have a value unknown to the inhabitants of a country like ours. — *Bush*. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt in the land. They *dwelled*, but Abram and Lot only sojourned in their wide-scattered encampments. — *Tomkins*. The Canaanites were descended from Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, and peopled the seacoast of Palestine, and generally the whole of the country westward of the Jordan. Canaan was also the progenitor of the Phœnicians. The Perizzite. They are not named in the catalogue of nations (Gen. 10), so that their origin, like that of other small tribes, such as the Avites and Gerizites, is left in obscurity. — *Bible Dictionary*: *Smith*.

8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife. It was most unseemly that this strife should arise before the heathen. Now Abram's noble character shines out. — *Tomkins*. He who has the promises can well afford to yield a point of difference for the holy sake of peace. And he it is who is the gainer by all he seems to concede. "The meek (and only they) inherit the earth." "He walks in the moral atmosphere of the Sermon on the Mount," Matt. 6: 28, &c. Abram appeals to their brotherly relations against any strife between themselves or their herdsmen. — *Jacobus*.

9. *Is* not the whole land before thee? Thus he gave his nephew the full choice. He was the head; yea, the whole land was given to him by the promise. But in his magnanimity he said to Lot, "Let there be no strife. *Is* not the *whole* land before thee?" — *Tomkins*.

10. And Lot lifted up his eyes . . . beheld . . . plain of Jordan. To the east there rises in the foreground the jagged range of the hills above Jericho; in the distance the dark wall of Moab; between them lies the wide valley of the Jordan, its course marked by the tract of forest in which its rushing stream is enveloped; and down to this valley a long and deep ravine, now as always the main line of communication by which it is approached from the central hills of Palestine, — a ravine rich with vine, olive, and fig. . . . To the south and the west the view commanded the bleak hills of Judea, varied by the heights crowned by what were afterwards the cities of Benjamin, and overhanging what in a later day was to be Jerusalem, and in the far distance the southern range on whose slope is Hebron. Northward are the hills which divide Judea from the rich plains of Samaria. — *Sinai and Palestine*: *Stanley*. Well watered. Heb., *All of it a well watered region*. This was the great necessity in the East. It would promise him security from periodical famine. It seemed to him a paradise. Here the Jordan is first referred to. This great river of Palestine, called the *Descender*, for in its swift course of 200 miles it falls 1,300 feet and over below the sea-level, when it reaches the Dead Sea. — *Jacobus*. Before the Lord destroyed, &c. The face of the country was doubtless altered by that destruction of the cities of the plain. — *J*. Sodom and Gomorrah. Then cities of the plain at the lower end of the Dead Sea. But now the sea covers all that plain, and it forms the lower bay of the Dead Sea. *Even* as the garden of the Lord. The lower plain of the Jordan was glorious as the vanished glory of Paradise, or as the rich plains of the Nile in Egypt, which were still fresh in the memory of Lot. — *Lange*. As thou comest unto Zoar. As Zoar was not in Egypt, but at the southern extremity of the plain of Jordan, the latter clause is to be connected with the first part of the verse, and the clause, "before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah," to be read in a parenthesis. Or we may adopt the equivalent construction of Houbigant, who translates the verse, "Before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it was all, as thou goest to Zoar, well watered, even as

plain of Jordan: and Lot journeyed east: and they separated¹ themselves the one from the other.

12. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom.

13. But the men of Sodom *were*

wicked and sinners² before the LORD exceedingly.

14. ¶ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

¹ Prov. 27: 10. ² Chap. 18: 20. Ezek. 16: 49. ³ Pet. 2: 7, 8.

the garden of the Lord, and as the land of Egypt." This gives the correct idea. Zoar is here so called by anticipation, as its name at this time was Bela (chap. 14: 2, 8, and 19: 22). — *Bush*.

11. Lot chose all the plain of Jordan. Lot was evidently governed by a worldly and selfish principle in selecting his new abode. He embraced the opportunity furnished him by Abram's generous proposal, and he chose what seemed the richest part of the land, without regard to the choice of Abram, and without regard to the moral destinations. He was free and eager to obtain the best part of the country, though by so doing he should remove far from the vicinity of the church, and of the public worship of God. — *Jacobus*. Lot makes the worst choice, while he thinks that he has chosen well. For his worldly-mindedness, the sin in his choice, he was first punished through the plundering of his house, and his captivity in the war of the kings, which followed soon after his choice, and then through his fearful flight from Sodom, and the losses, misfortunes, and crimes which were connected with it. Thus the want of regard to true piety, the selfishness, the carelessness as to the snares of the world, must ever be punished. And, indeed, it is just when one thinks that in his own wilful and sinful ways he has attained his highest wishes, he finds himself ensnared in the retributions of divine righteousness, which rules over him and works with solemn irony. — *Lange*.

12. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan. As distinguished from the valley of the Jordan, being the portion of Palestine between the valley and the Mediterranean Sea. — *Bush*. Cities of the plain. There were five of these cities — Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar — occupying the vale of Siddim, at the Dead Sea. These cities were under their respective kings, who were attacked by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and his allies (chap. 14: 19), and defeated, till Abram came to the rescue. Four of these cities were destroyed by God's manifest and swift judgment, raining down fire out of heaven. — *Jacobus*. Pitched his tent toward Sodom. We may suppose that Lot fully intended to keep at a safe distance from that scene of abominations; but, having once come within the perilous vicinity of the tents of sin, he is imperceptibly drawn onward. So treacherous is fallen nature in its weakness, that, having once been persuaded to tread the borders of forbidden ground, we are easily induced to proceed a *little* farther, to take *one* more step, till at length every restraint is broken through, and we are borne forward into the vortex of sin. So with Lot. The next that we hear of him, he has actually planted himself in Sodom. — *Bush*.

13. The men of Sodom were wicked. The higher blessing of good society, then, was wanting in the choice of Lot. It is probable that he was a single man when he parted from Abram, and therefore that he married a woman of Sodom. The people of Sodom sinned exceedingly, and before the Lord. Lot has fallen into the very vortex of vice and blasphemy. — *Murphy*. The corrupt state of society in Sodom soon discovered the great mistake of Lot's choice, and revealed the fallacy upon which he had acted to seek fine lands and crops, without regard to religious privileges. Lot was a professor of the true religion, and had been enjoying the privilege of public worship with Abram; yet he seems to make little account of this in seeking a settlement. He is called "a righteous man" by the apostle Peter; and his record is, "That that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2: 8). To which Bishop Hall remarks, "He vexed his own soul; for who made him stay there?" — *Jacobus*.

14. The Lord said unto Abram. He was more than rewarded for his true action toward Lot. We may be sure that this was a great crisis in the life of Abram; and, in his noble and unworldly conduct, we must "glorify the grace of God." It is likely that up to this time he had viewed Lot as his heir. The first promise, "I will make thee a great nation," may have been regarded as consistent with this. But now Lot was gone; and at

15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and¹ to thy seed forever.

16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered.

17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

18. Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre,² which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

¹ Chap. 12:7. ² Chap. 35:27.

this very time the blank was filled by the direct promise of "seed as the dust of the earth."
— *Tomkins*.

15. All the land which thou seest. Abram is here regarded as the head of a chosen seed; and hence the bestowment of this fair territory on the race is an actual grant of it to the head of the race. — *Murphy*. (1) First he was assured in general that he should be blessed, and become a blessing (12:1-3). (2) On the second interview he is further assured that the land to which he had come by faith should be the heritage of his posterity, as a free grant by God (chap. 12:7). And now (3) he is further guaranteed as to this heritage, and the terms are such as to imply something enduring beyond any mere earthly and temporal possessions. — *Jacobus*. To thy seed forever. *Unto eternity*; a period of very long, but indefinite, duration. Subsequent facts in the history of the chosen people show that this promise was to be understood conditionally, as they might by transgression forfeit the possession of this covenanted region, as was actually the case (Lev. 26:33-Isa. 63:18). If, however, the Jews are to be hereafter restored to the land of their fathers, as many interpret the prophecies respecting them, these words will receive a still more exact accomplishment than they have hitherto done. Even now it is common to speak of the Jews obtaining possession of *their own* land, as though their title had never been extinguished. — *Bush*.

16. I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. The literal increase is not excluded; but this was not all that was meant, else it would be of small moment comparatively. But the spiritual posterity, and the true Israel, after the spirit, — *this* was the grant here made to Abram. — *Jacobus*. If they who are of faith are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:9, 29), then will the promise have its literal accomplishment; when the kingdoms of this world are given to the saints of the most high God, and when the uttermost parts of the earth become the possession of Christ. — *Hodge*.

17. Arise, walk through the land. It was a command or permission to Abraham, not as a lonely individual, but with all his establishment, to travel over and sojourn in any portion of the country that he pleased, and that, too, as a pledge of its finally becoming the perpetual inheritance of his seed. — *Bush*.

18. Came and dwelt in the plain (oaks) of Mamre. In his wandering through the land he came to Hebron, where he settled by the terebinth (or oaks) of the Amorite Mamre (chap. 14:13), and built an altar to Jehovah. The term "dwelt" (or set himself, settled down) denotes that Abram made this place the central point of his subsequent stay in Canaan. — *Keil*. The oak-grove of Mamre lay in Hebron, and is often mentioned as the residence of the patriarch (chap. 14:13, 18; 35:27). It had its name from the Amorite Mamre, a confederate of Abram (chap. 14:13, 24). — *Lange*. Hebron. About 20 miles south of Jerusalem. One of the most ancient cities in the world still existing. Its original name was Kirjath-Arba. The chief interest of this city arises from its having been the scene of some of the most remarkable events in the lives of the patriarch. Sarah died at Hebron; and Abraham then bought from Ephron the Hittite the field and cave of Machpelah to serve as a family tomb. The cave is still there; and the massive walls of the *Haram*, or mosque, within which it lies, form the most remarkable object in the whole city. El-Khulêl is the modern name. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Built an altar. This is Abram's third altar in the land of promise. Before he can have a movable sanctuary, — a tabernacle, — he builds an altar wherever he plants himself. He must have the domestic and public worship of God maintained wherever he comes to dwell. And along with his own abode he provides for the abode of the Highest, as a prime necessity of his nature. — *Jacobus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. When Philip Henry, the father of the celebrated commentator, sought the hand of the only daughter and heiress of Mr. Matthews in marriage, an objection was made by her father, who admitted that he was a gentleman, a scholar, and an excellent preacher; but he was a stranger, and "they did not even know where he came from."—"True," said the daughter, who had well weighed the excellent qualities and graces of the stranger; "but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him." Abraham was going toward blessing and Christ and the millennium. The Sodomites were going towards certain and sudden ruin: yet Lot chose to go with them rather than with him. It is wise to know where our companions are going, before we go with them.

II. Lot's choice was like that of the first two suitors of Portia in Shakspeare's "Merchant of Venice," who chose the gold and silver urns, and found only disappointments in them. Abraham chose the leaden urn of self-denial; but it contained the treasure.—*P.*

III. **Abraham's wealth.**—Abraham is treated by the native princes and chieftains of the land as "a mighty prince," an equal, if not a superior, to themselves. Then we learn that his house-born servants able to bear arms and to make a rapid march were not less than 318. A body of such men can be furnished only by a population four times its own number, including women and children. We can, therefore, not reckon the patriarch's camp as containing less than 1,272 souls; and this number of people could not well have been accommodated in so few as 100 tents. Now as to the cattle. Job's wealth, at about the same age, consisted of 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 (500 yoke of) oxen, and 500 asses.—*Kitto*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Abraham's experience in Egypt teaches that wrong-doing to escape trouble leads us into trouble.
2. Abraham was an example of a good friend, giving the best to others, yielding rights.
3. Here is the way to avoid quarrels.
4. Lot was the example of a selfish man, and it led him into trouble.
5. Abraham was doubly blessed in doing right.
6. Lot shows the danger of seeking wealth at the expense of religion and its institutions.
7. Lot went into bad company for worldly advantage, and lost all, and barely escaped with his life.
8. No one is safe who pitches his tent toward Sodom, who goes as near the world as he can.
9. God's best promises are yet to be fulfilled. They will grow richer and richer.

LESSON VII.—AUGUST 15, 1880.

ABRAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.—GEN. 14 : 12 - 24.

TIME.—B. C. 1913. Five years after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Abraham lived in *Hebron*, 12 miles north of Jerusalem. The battle in which Lot was captured took place in the valley of *Siddim*, on the southern borders of the Dead Sea. Abram at Mamre or Hebron receives the news, and follows, overtaking them at *Dan*, and pursuing them as far as Damascus. On his return the king of Sodom, and Melchizedek king of Salem (afterwards Jerusalem) meet him in the valley of Shaveh, probably near Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.

Chedorla'omer, king of Elam, that is, of Susiana (Elam was properly the mountainous region on the eastern margin of the plain of Chaldea, but in a wider sense it included Susiana), had conquered the valley of the Jordan, and brought into subjection to his sceptre the five towns of the borders of the Dead Sea, that is, the country where Lot had

settled (Gen. 14 : 12). Twelve years he remained their master, but in the thirteenth year the petty kings of that region, seeing that Chedorlaomer was occupied by wars in the north of Arabia, thought they could throw off the yoke ; but the Elamite king came against them with his vassals, Amraphel, king of Shinar, Arioch, king of Ellasar, and Thargal, king of nations, or of the nomadic tribes. The battle took place in the vale of Siddim, on the borders of the Dead Sea, where were many wells of bitumen. The people of the country were routed. Sodom, Gomorrah, and the three other cities were pillaged, and Lot was taken away captive. Of this Abram was informed by a fugitive. He was at this time living at Mamre (Hebron), and was in alliance with the Canaanitish prince of the country. With his ally and the two brothers of that prince, and all his own servants, he commenced the pursuit of the enemy, who had begun to retreat. He overtook them at the northern extremity of Palestine, at the place where in later times was built the city of Dan. Attacking them by night, he gained the victory. The four kings were pursued to the neighborhood of Damascus, Lot was rescued, and all the booty retaken. It was on this occasion that Abram received the blessing of Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, whose tribe, no doubt of Semitic origin, was one of the very few who in their pastoral life had been able to preserve intact the primitive belief in the unity of God. — *Lenormant and Chevallier*.

12. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt¹ in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13. ¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew ;

for he dwelt² in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner : and these *were* confederate with Abram.

14. And when Abram heard that

¹ Chap. 13: 12. Num. 16: 26. ² Tim. 6: 9. ³ Chap. 13: 18.

EXPLANATORY.

12. And they took Lot, &c. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13 : 20). The passage is so constructed as to give a sort of melancholy emphasis to the fact of Lot's dwelling in Sodom, which is entirely lost sight of in our translation. The unhappy man now begins to reap the bitter consequences of taking up his abode in the midst of the habitations of wickedness. — *Bush*. That wealth which was the cause of his former quarrels is made a prey to merciless heathens ; that place which his eye covetously chose betrays his life and goods. How many Christians, whilst they have looked at gain, have lost themselves ! — *Bishop Hall*. When we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourselves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that choices made by our lusts should issue to our comfort. Particular mention is made of their taking Lot's *goods*, those goods which had occasioned his contest with Abram, and his separation from him. God justly deprives us of those enjoyments by which we have suffered ourselves to be deprived of our enjoyment of him. — *Henry*. Departed. The invaders were now laden with booty. Their first concern was to transfer this to their native country, and deposit it in a place of safety. It was not prudent to delay while they were encumbered with so much valuable property. — *Murphy*.

13. Came one that had escaped. Probably one of Lot's retainers. Abram the Hebrew. The term "the Hebrew" has been understood either as distinguishing Abram from the Gentile races and people, or that Abram is thus called here, owing to his descent from Eber, chap. 10 : 21 ; or, as the Septuagint renders it, and which the Hebrew word will bear, Abram the *crosser-over*, or the *immigrant*, viz., from the other side of the Euphrates. — *Alford*. Plain (oaks) of Mamre. (See Lesson VI., chap. 13 : 18.) Afterwards called Hebron. Amorites. Dwellers on the summits, mountaineers, — one of the chief nations who possessed the land of Canaan before its conquest by the Israelites. They are contrasted with the Canaanites, who were the dwellers in the lowlands ; and the two thus formed the main broad divisions of the Holy Land. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Eshcol (the cluster of grapes) was in after-times the name given by the children of Israel to a valley near Hebron, because of the bunch which the spies brought from thence. But there can hardly be any connection between the two names. Of Aner nothing is known. — *Alford*. Confederate with Abram. The Amorite Mamre, and his two brothers, were named as confederates with Abram, because they assisted him now in the war, ver. 24. Their confederation shows his overwhelming influence. — *Lange*.

his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.¹

15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote² them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus.

16. And he brought back³ all the

goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17. ¶ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him), at the valley of Shaveh. which *is* the king's dale.⁴

18. And Melchizedek⁵ king of Salem brought forth bread and wine;

¹ Deut. 34: 1. ² Isa. 41: 2, 3. ³ 1 Sam. 30, 8: 18. ⁴ 2 Sam. 18: 18. ⁵ Heb. 7: 1.

14. His brother. Kin, relative. Strictly speaking, Lot was his nephew. He armed his trained servants. The expression is significant. He arms his trained, i.e., his proved servants, and practised in the use of arms, especially those born in his own house. That the patriarchs carried weapons, is clear from chs. 34: 25; 49: 5. — *Lange*. Abram had trained them in spiritual things, in the service of God, as well as in fidelity to himself; see chs. 18: 19; 24: 1-49. — *Wordsworth*. Three hundred and eighteen. Which implies a following of more than one thousand men, women, and children. His flocks and herds must have corresponded in extent to such an establishment. — *Murphy*. Consider what he might have done under the circumstances. Instead of risking life and property, many would have let Lot take the consequences of his worldly choice. — *Class and Desk*. Unto Dan. The situation of this Dan is uncertain. Probably Laish, near the sources of the Jordan, at the foot of Mount Hermon. — *Class and Desk*. (Keil says Dan in Gilead.)

15. He divided himself against them. He and his allies attacked from different quarters. By night. Chardin tells us, "that the manner of the Arabs making war, and pillaging the caravans, is, to keep by the side of them, or to follow them in the rear, nearer or farther off, according to their forces, which it is very easy to do in Arabia, which is one great plain; and in the night they silently fall upon the camp, and carry off one part of it before the rest are got under arms." He supposes that Abraham fell upon the camp of the four kings, that had carried away Lot, precisely in the same Arab manner, and by that means, with unequal forces, accomplished his design, and rescued Lot. And he adds, that it is to be remembered, that the combats of the age of Abraham more resembled a fight among the mob than the bloody and destructive wars of Europe. — *Harmer*. Hobah. This place has not been satisfactorily made out. It was to the left hand, i.e., the north, of Damascus. The Hebrews regarded themselves as facing the east, and named the quarters of the compass accordingly. The Jews regard the village of Jobar, a few miles north-east of Damascus, as answering to Hobah. At Barzeh, very near, is a spot held in veneration by the people as having been the "praying-place" of Abraham, when he returned thanks to God after the discomfiture of the kings. — *Alford*. Damascus. This is the first mention of this city in the Bible. It is one of the most ancient, and has at all times been one of the most important, of the cities of Syria. It is situated in a plain of vast size and of extreme fertility, which lies east of the great chain of Anti-Libanus, on the edge of the desert. It is still a city of 150,000 inhabitants. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

17. The king . . . went out to meet him. The little victorious band, now returning in peace, are hailed by every one that meets them. The kings of the different cities go forth to congratulate them, and to thank them as the deliverers of their country. If Abraham had been one of those marauders whom he defeated, he would have followed up his victory, and made himself master of the whole country; which he might probably have done with ease in their present enfeebled and scattered condition. But the principles by which he was governed as a servant of God prevented him from doing this. — *Bush*. The valley of Shaveh . . . the king's dale. *Shaveh*, probably near Jerusalem on the north; *king's dale* (2 Sam. 18: 18), so called probably from this meeting. — *Class and Desk*.

18. Melchizedek; i.e., king of righteousness. There is something surprising and mysterious in the first appearance of Melchizedek and in the subsequent references to him. Bearing a title which Jews in after ages would recognize as designating their own sovereign, bearing gifts which recall to Christians the Lord's Supper, this Canaanite crosses

and he *was* the priest¹ of the most high God.²

19. And he blessed him, and said,

Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor³ of heaven and earth :

20. And blessed *be* the most high

¹ Ps. 110: 4. Heb. 5: 6; 7: 3, 11. ² Mic. 6: 6. ³ Ver. 22. Ps. 24: 1; 50: 10.

for a moment the path of Abram, and is unhesitatingly recognized as a person of higher spiritual rank than the friend of God. Disappearing as suddenly as he came in, he is lost to the sacred writings for 1,000 years; and then a few emphatic words for another moment bring him into sight as a type of the coming Lord of David. Once more, after another 1,000 years, the Hebrew Christians are taught to see in him a proof that it was the consistent purpose of God to abolish the Levitical priesthood. His person, his office, his relation to Christ, and the seat of his sovereignty, have given rise to innumerable discussions, which even now can scarcely be considered as settled.—*Bullock*. The most probable view of the true character of Melchizedek is that given by Josephus, viz., that he was a Canaanitish prince, a pious and religious man; a personage eminently raised up by God, whose genealogy was perhaps designedly veiled in mystery, that he might be in this, as in other things, a type of Christ. He is mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures only in the 110th Psalm and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. 5, 6, 7), where the apostle, aiming to show the pre-eminence of Christ's priesthood over that of Aaron, avails himself of the somewhat remarkable coincidences which subsisted between what is here related of Melchizedek, and what he designed to affirm of Christ. As Melchizedek combined in his own person the dignity both of king and priest, this fact enabled him to illustrate more strikingly, to the Jews to whom he wrote, the union of the same offices in Christ, who sits "a priest upon his throne." Again, as far as appears from the sacred record, Melchizedek was a priest, not by inheritance, but by immediate divine appointment. He derived his office from no predecessor, and delivered it down to no successor, but stands before us in the sacred record single and alone, constituting himself an order of priesthood. In this respect he was eminently "made like the Son of God;" who was also a priest, not after the manner of the sons of Aaron, by descent from their predecessors, but after the similitude of Melchizedek, that is, by an immediate, divine constitution.—*Bush*. **King of Salem.** *Salem* means "peace." By some thought to be Jerusalem. But this is doubtful, though it was anciently called Jebus (Judg. 19: 10, 11. 1 Chron. 11: 4, 5), and Salem (Ps. 76: 2).—*Class and Desk*. Melchizedek was a type of Christ. (1) He was a royal priest, a king (Heb. 7: 1, 2). (2) He was of the highest rank (Heb. 7: 4-10). (3) He was unique, without predecessor or successor (Heb. 7: 3). (4) He was priest of a better covenant (Heb. 7: 11-16). **Bread and wine.** Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine as the priest of the most high God. There seems to be an intimation that this was a priestly act, and accordingly the crowning part of a sacred feast. It was probably connected with the offering of a sacrifice. This view of his acts is confirmed by the blessing which he pronounces as the priest of the most high God.—*Murphy*. **Priest of the most high God.** Not (so much) for the purpose of ministering to a certain number, but for the purpose of proclaiming to all that God was the only living and true God, and that there was a way by which they might be reconciled to him, even by the blood, the atonement. It would appear that the king of Sodom was present at the interview. Well might the Canaanites have said, "Of a truth these men are the servants of the most high God."—*Robert G.*

19. And he blessed him, and said, &c. That is, Melchizedek blessed Abraham, in doing which he performed one of the characteristic functions of a priest, whose duty it was "to bless in the name of the Lord forever." (1 Chron. 23: 13. Num. 6: 23: 27.) Viewed in this light, the act of blessing on the part of Melchizedek would imply more than a personal well-wishing: it would be prophetic. In pronouncing a benediction, he would set his seal to what God had done before him.—*Bush*. **Of the most high God;** i.e., servant and friend of God; belonging to him, under his care. The one God was worshipped, as a testimony against polytheism and idolatry, as the living God, omnipotent and supreme. And this was done formally, publicly, and stately, by a set ministry, and in such form of worship as acknowledged the need of the great blood-shedding for atonement, and of the great high-priesthood to come.—*Jacobus*. **Possessor of heaven and earth.** The idea of a "possessor" is very intimately related to that of a "disposer," especially when, as in the present case, the possession is founded upon creation; and we think it highly probable that the words were intended to convey a tacit acknowledgment of the sovereign right of the most high God, who had created all things, to make such an allot-

God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes¹ of all.

21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted² up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23. That I will not *take*³ from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich :

24. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre ; let them take their portion.⁴

¹ Heb. 7: 1-10. ² Exod. 6: 8. ³ Esth. 9: 15, 16. ⁴ 1 Tim. 5: 18.

ment of the earth or any part of it as he saw fit. The speaker, therefore, in employing this language virtually puts his Amen to the divine promise which secured to Abraham and his seed the possession of the land of Canaan. — *Bush*.

20. He gave him tithes of all. Giving the tenth was a practical acknowledgment of the divine priesthood of Melchizedek; for the tenth was, according to the general custom, the offering presented to the Deity. — *Keil*. Giving of our substance for the support of God's worship, and for his poor, is as old as the Church, and grows with the Church's true prosperity. The Hebrew word for *tithes* is derived from a word meaning both "ten" and "to be rich." Ten is the rich number, because it includes all the units under it. There is the same double idea in the Greek word, "ten" being derived from a word meaning to receive or hold, because the ten fingers receive or hold every thing. So that in the very words "tenth," "tithe," there is expressed to us the connection between paying our tithes, and prosperity. No Christian, no church, can prosper with unpa'd tithes.

21. The king of Sodom said . . . Give me the persons. According to the war customs still existing among the Arab tribes, Abram might have retained the recovered goods, and his right was acknowledged by the king of Sodom. But with honest pride, and a generosity unknown in that part of the world, he replied, "I will not take even a sandal-thong." — *J. F. and B.*

22. Lifted up my hand. A solemn confirmation of an oath. The most high God. Abram solemnly and expressly identifies the God of himself and of Melchizedek in the presence of the king of Sodom. The most high God of Melchizedek is the God of the first chapter of Genesis, and the Jehovah of Adam, Noah, and Abram. — *Murphy*.

23. Shoe-latchet. The thong that the sandal was tied with (John 1: 27); a most valueless thing. — *Class and Desk* Lest thou say, I have made Abram rich. If the Possessor of heaven and earth has engaged to provide for him, he will not be beholden to an earthly potentate, especially where his motives in so doing were liable to be misconstrued; where it might be said that he was prompted to the rescue of Lot more by the hope of plunder than the spirit of benevolence. His conduct in this emergency affords a good hint to Christians. They are really so rich in their own inheritance, that it ill becomes them to crave the possessions of others. — *Bush*.

24. The young men; of Abraham's family. Eaten; and which therefore I cannot return, of the flocks, &c., we have rescued. Portion, share of the spoil. Men. My allies. He would not enforce their offering or surrender of spoil; but, leaving them to make their own bargain, was still anxious that they should have "their portion." — *Class and Desk*. He could refuse for himself: he could not force his religious views and actions on others.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*. Christ made known to the Ancient Church, by Robert Gordon, p. 82.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace." — *Pope*.

"God bless all our gains, say we;
But, may God bless all our losses,
Better suits with our degree."

II. Bad companions. — What you learn from bad habits and in bad society, you will never forget, and it will be a lasting pang to you. I tell you in all sincerity, not as in the

excitement of speech, but as I would confess and have confessed before God, I would give my right hand to-night if I *could forget* that which I have learned in bad society.—*J. B. Gough.*

III. Those who willingly associate with the sinful are like the river Thames, which is a sweet and pretty river enough near its source; but in the great metropolis it has kept company with drains and sewers under the belief that its current was too powerful and too pure to be injured by them. It was meant that the river should purify the sewer; but, instead of that, the sewer has corrupted the river.—*Union Magazine.*

IV. Vers. 22, 23. Two years ago the copyright of Moody and Sankey's Gospel Hymns already amounted to \$50,000. And yet they would not touch it themselves, but let a committee of gentlemen in New York take entire charge of it, though they had as good a right to it as any man has to his property. But they did it lest any one should say that they preached and labored not for souls, but to make money. How many of those who speak against them ever gave away a fortune that they might save souls?

PRACTICAL.

1. Riches gained by sinful conformity to the world are a very uncertain and dangerous possession.
2. Those who become the companions of fools are liable to be destroyed with them.
3. Those who forsake God's ways forsake God's special care.
4. Piety is wise and brave, as well as religious.
5. True friendship sacrifices itself for others.
6. We must do good even to those whose misfortunes are the fruit of their own folly.
7. The giving of tithes, a definite portion of our gains, to God, is our privilege and duty.
8. God has ever had some faithful witnesses for himself and his truth.
9. The good must often refrain from claiming their full rights, where the claim might bring injury upon the cause of Christ.

LESSON VIII.—AUGUST 22, 1880.

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAM.—GEN. 15 : 1-18.

TIME.—B. C. 1912. A few months after our last lesson.

PLACE.—Hebron, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem,—the home of Abraham.

INTRODUCTION.

The event of the last lesson completes the first period of Abraham's life, in which the *temporal blessing* of his race was clearly revealed. The *second period* opens with a *fourth* visit of Jehovah's word to Abram, to assure him of his blessing and protection. His faith had begun again to waver. With unbounded promises of the number and blessedness of his offspring, he was yet childless; with vast wealth, he had no heir but his steward and slave Eliezer of Damascus. And now God vouchsafed to him a plainer and more solemn revelation, which was made the more emphatic by the threefold form of a *promise*, a *sign*, and a *covenant*. The *promise* was that his own son should be his heir. The *sign* was given by a view of the clear sky of an Eastern night, studded with stars. This promise was ratified by a new COVENANT, in which Abram stood to God in the relation of the Father of the faithful.—*Smith.* Abraham, a man of peaceful tastes and habits, had been roused to an unwonted course of action; but now, as he walks in the solitude of his own tents, and all the recent excitement has passed away, there is a strong re-action. Human regrets and fears press him down; and solemn and earnest thoughts overwhelm him. How does he know that the defeated kings, overcome by surprise, may not return in overpowering force, and exact a bloody price for the victory he has won? Then, what is his reward for all the toil and labor he has undergone? Lot, whose alienated heart he had probably hoped to win by so great a service, is still as far from him as ever. For the sake of the fat pastures and well-watered lands of Sodom, he is content still to dwell among men whom he must by this time have known from experience to be "sinners before the Lord exceedingly."—*Kitt.*

1. After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision,¹ saying, Fear² not, Abram: I am thy shield,³ and thy exceeding great reward.⁴

2. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless,⁵ and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born⁶ in my house is mine heir.

4. And behold, the word of the LORD came⁷ unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels⁷ shall be thine heir.

5. And he brought him forth

¹ Chap. 46: 2. Num. 12: 6. Dan. 10: 1. Acts 10: 11, 22. ² Luke 1: 13. ³ Deut. 33: 29. Ps. 3: 3; 84: 11; 91: 4. ⁴ Ps. 144: 5. Heb. 13: 5. ⁵ Chap. 30: 1. Isa. 56: 5. Acts 7: 5. ⁶ Prov. 29: 21. ⁷ Chap. 17: 16.

EXPLANATORY.

1. **After these things.** The recapture of Lot, and its circumstances, chap. 14, — our last lesson. **The word of the Lord came.** This phrase, which is common in the divine revelations to the prophets, here first occurs. — *Jacobus.* In a vision. It has been questioned whether the "vision" was a dream, or waking vision. The way in which Abram was led out, and saw the stars, and the subsequent reality of the sacrifice, look like a waking vision; and it is not till ver. 14 that he falls into a deep sleep. — *Cook.* Fear not, Abram (see Introduction). The most eminent saints are prone at times to give way to discouragements; but God, who watches over the secret fears as well as the outward afflictions of his people, interposes at the needful moment, and ministers the support, confidence, and courage which they require. — *Bush.* I am thy shield. Defence, protection, against every evil. Gr., *I will protect thee.* The pronoun is emphatic, I. You can rest on my divine power to carry you through all difficulties. "I am the Almighty God," chap. 17: 1. — *Jacobus.* And thy exceeding great reward. Sept., *thy reward shall be exceedingly great*: "I will multiply thy reward exceedingly." Heb., *thy reward multiplied exceedingly* (Rev. 1: 17, 18). It is not the great things which Jehovah would give, but *Jehovah himself*, to which the mind of Abram is turned as his reward. — *A. Gosman, D.D.* He was as safe as God himself could keep him. The consideration that God himself is, and will be, a shield to his people, to secure them from all destructive evils, should be sufficient to silence all their perplexing, tormenting fears. God himself is the chosen and promised felicity of holy souls; chosen in this world, promised in a better. — *Henry.* He that has God has all blessings, all good things.

2. **Lord Jehovah.** The name Adonai (Lord) is here for the first time used in the divine records. It denotes one who has authority, and therefore, when applied to God, the supreme Lord; *Jehovah*, the self-existent, the living God. The Jews, from a feeling of reverence, avoided the utterance of this sacred name, except on the most solemn occasions. — *Murphy.* What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? If you are my reward, what will you give me? Of what avail are all my possessions, wealth, and power, since I have no child? — *Keil.* The intimation is also, that while lacking a posterity it would seem impossible for him to receive any real benefit or blessing. — *Jacobus.* The steward of my house. Heb., *son of possession of my house*, — that is, *heir*; he to whom my possessions must descend. As Abram was alone in this strange land, and separated from his kindred, it would seem that he could only look to his steward, — his confidential servant, and manager of his house, — as his successor and heir. — *Jacobus.* Eliezer (*God of help, or mighty to help*) of Damascus. Probably a servant acquired at that city during Abram's journeying. — *Alford.*

3. **One born in my house** (*son of my house*); i.e., "one attached to, a dependent of, my house." — *Alford.* It is not synonymous with house-born. It has a deeper meaning; it designates the most esteemed servant of his house. — *Lange.*

4. **This shall not be thine heir.** Most positively and decidedly does Abram's covenant God speak to the very point of all his fears, and make it now most certain to him that his highest hopes shall be satisfied. — *Jacobus.*

5. **And he brought him forth abroad.** Whether Abram at this time was "in the body, or out of the body," is a matter of no moment. The reality of the occurrence is the same in either case. — *Keil.* Tell the stars. In the promise to Noah the rainbow had been the sign given from on high, — a sacramental promise of mercy to mankind. Now,

abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars,¹ if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him,² So shall thy seed be.

6. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted³ it to him for righteousness.

7. And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought⁴ thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8. And he said, Lord God,⁵ whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

¹ Deut. 1:10. ² Rom. 4:18. ³ Rom. 4:3, 6, &c. Gal. 3:6. Jas. 2:23. ⁴ Chap. 12:1. ⁵ Judg. 6:17.
2 Kings 20:8. Luke 1:18.

to Abram the still brighter and more enduring token is the starry firmament. There is the pledge of a brilliant future for his house, even as regards material prosperity; the pledge of still greater blessings to that spiritual family, which by baptism into Christ became "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." — *Cook*.

6. He believed in the Lord. The Hebrew term "believe" means to *rely upon*. The word is *Aman*, from which we have *Amen*, meaning to be sure, and then to be assured, or to *confide in*. It was a most confident reliance upon the supreme ability of God to make good his promise, notwithstanding all natural hinderances, and all present appearances to the contrary. — *Jacobus*. How did Abram manifest his belief in Jehovah? God commanded him, "Take me a heifer," &c. And Abram took the animals as prescribed, and did as God commanded him. By this prompt fulfilment of that which God ordered him to do, Abram showed, as matter of fact, that he believed Jehovah; and that which God did with the animals which Abram sacrificed was the practical declaration on Jehovah's side that he reckoned Abram's faith as righteousness. — *Alford*. He (God) counted, esteemed, reckoned, imputed, set to his account. — *Gosman*. It. His faith in Jehovah. To him for righteousness. Righteousness in the sense of justification. The sense then is, Faith was imputed to him for justification; i.e., in order to his becoming and being treated as righteous. — *Dr. Hodge*. This faith is viewed here, not merely as the root of all true obedience to the will of God, and thus the sum of righteousness or personal holiness, but as embracing and steadfastly resting upon (as the word rendered "believed" here means) God, as the God of grace and salvation. It is the act by which he goes out from himself, and relies upon God for righteousness and grace. The promise which Abram's faith embraced was the promise of salvation through the covenant seed, and he so regarded it. His faith, therefore, was essentially the same with that specific faith in Christ which is said to justify. See Rom. 4:13. — *Lange*. Powerful as is the effect of these words, "*Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness*," when we read them in their first untarnished freshness, they gain immensely in their original language, to which neither Greek nor German, much less Latin or English, can furnish any full equivalent. "He was supported, he was built up, he reposed as a child in its mother's arms" (such seems the force of the Hebrew word), in the strength of God, in God whom he did not see, more than in the giant empires of earth, and the bright lights of heaven, or the claims of tribe and kindred, which were always before him. His faith, as we have seen, transpires not in any outward profession of faith, but in his prayers, in his actions, in the righteousness, the "justice," the "uprightness," the moral "elevation" of soul and spirit, which sent him on his way straight forward, without turning to the right hand or to the left. His faith is known to us only through "his works." He and his descendants are blessed, not as in the Koran, because of his adoption of the first article of the creed of Islam, but because he had "obeyed the voice of the Lord, and kept his charge, his commandments, his statutes, and his laws." — *Stanley*. The immediate object of the patriarch's faith was a personal type of Christ, — Isaac as the son of promise, — and so his faith had its training to lay hold on Christ, while the plan of grace was gradually unfolding. The promise of a Canaan was all along pointing forward to a better Canaan, that is, an heavenly (Heb. 11:16). The promise of a seed was pointing forward to the Seed which was Christ. And thus there is a constant unfolding, more and more, and the spiritual and eternal are set forth and seen through the physical and temporal. — *Jacobus*.

7. That brought thee out of Ur. Let Abram confirm his faith in God by looking at the steps already taken for giving him the land of promise. It was in God's plan, in bringing him out of Ur, to give him possession of Canaan. This is enough. Will God now falter or fail in the midst? So the Christian may encourage himself in God by looking back at all that God has already done for him, at the ways in which he has already led him. — *Jacobus*. Ur of the Chaldees. See Lesson V.

9. And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10. And he took unto him all these, and divided¹ them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds² divided he not.

11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep³ fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a

¹ Jer. 34 : 18, 19. ² Lev. 1 : 17. ³ Chap. 2 : 21. ⁴ Sam. 26 : 12. Job 4 : 13.

8. Whereby shall I know? Not an expression of doubt, but of desire for the confirmation or sealing of a promise which transcended human thought and conception.—*Keil*. Many instances are recorded where God has been graciously pleased to give signs to his people for the confirmation of their faith, when there was not any doubt upon their minds respecting either his faithfulness or power. See Judg. 6 : 14-21, 36-40. 2 Kings 20 : 8-11.—*Bush*.

9. Take me a heifer, &c. The way in which the Lord chose to meet his wish is, in all respects, remarkable. He entered into a formal ritual covenant with him, after the manner of men. It was the most solemn of all forms of ratifying a treaty or covenant among the divers ancient nations and among the rest of the Chaldeans.—*Kitto*. The animals are (strikingly enough) all those which were afterwards used in the Levitical sacrifices. It was thus a foreshadow of that ritual, as that was of the gospel system. Of three years old. Under the law these animals were generally offered when they were one year old; but these were, no doubt, required to be of the age of three years, because they were then full grown, in their most perfect state, and therefore most suitable to be made use of on the present extraordinary occasion.—*Bush*. It has been said that the transaction was not a real sacrifice, as there was no sprinkling of blood nor offering on an altar; but the essence of the true Hebrew sacrifice was in the slaying of the victim, for the very word (*Zebach*, sacrifice) signifies *slaying*, and it was rather with the shedding of blood than with its sprinkling that atonement was made (Heb. 11 : 22).—*Cook*.

10. Divided them in the midst. This very solemn form of ratifying a covenant is again particularly mentioned in Jer. 24 : 18. It consisted in cutting the throat of the victim, and pouring out its blood. The carcass was then divided lengthwise, as nearly as possible into two equal parts, which being placed opposite to each other at a short distance, the covenanting parties approached at the opposite ends of the passage thus formed, and, meeting in the middle, took the customary oath.—*Bush*. The division of the sacrifices into two portions represents the two parties to the covenant. As these portions constitute in reality one animal, so these two parties to the covenant are joined in one.—*Jacobus*. Each piece one against another. Head against head, shoulder against shoulder, leg against leg, and so of the other parts; with a considerable space between, through which the covenanting parties were to pass (ver. 17).—*Bush*. But the birds divided he not. The same thing was afterwards prescribed in the law (Lev. 1 : 17). Fowls were considered rather as mere appendages to the sacrifice, and their blood was not sprinkled upon the altar. Yet in the present instance it is probable that the birds, like the several parts of the animals, were laid whole even against each other.—*Bush*.

11. When the fowls came down. The birds of prey. The word used means any rapacious animal, especially vultures and other birds of prey.—*Cook*. Abram drove them away. As the animals slain and divided represent the only means and way through which the two parties can meet in a covenant of peace, they must be preserved pure and un mutilated for the end they have to serve.—*Murphy*.

12. When the sun was going down. A solemn time for concluding the covenant between God and the seed of Abram.—*Cook*. A deep sleep. The same word as that used Gen. 2 : 21, when Eve was taken from Adam's side. The constant translation (ecstasy) by the LXX. shows the belief that the sleep was sent by God for purposes of divine revelation.—*Cook*. A horror of great darkness. Awful sense of divine presence. Darkness of night without, and of soul within.—*Class and Desk*.

13. Know of a surety, &c. Abram is now most positively forewarned of the delays he should experience, and how his faith must look for its realization beyond his natural lifetime. Hence this example is cited by the apostle as an eminent instance of patient

stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict¹ them four hundred years;

14. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge:² and afterward shall they come out with great substance.³

15. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.⁴

16. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the

iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.⁵

17. And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18. In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

¹ Exod. 12 : 40. ² Exod. 6 : 6. ³ Exod. 12 : 36. ⁴ Chap. 25 : 8. Job 5 : 26. ⁵ Matt. 23 : 32. 1 Thess. 2 : 16.

waiting for the promises (Heb. 6). — *Jacobus*. Shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs. The primary and principal reference here is to the land of Egypt, although from the language of Gen. 17 : 8, Ps. 105 : 9-12, it would seem that even the land of Canaan itself, which, though theirs by promise, was not actually made over to them as a possession and inheritance till some generations afterwards, was also intended; and in the mean time was actually the scene of more or less persecution to the patriarchs, as is clear from Gen. 21 : 9-26, 7, 14, 15. — *Bush*. It was 400 years in round numbers (430 years) from the departure of Abram from Haran, B. C. 1921, to the exodus, B. C. 1491. — *Class and Desk*.

14. Will I judge. Overrule and punish. (Exod. 6 : 6. Deut. 6 : 22.) Great substance. Numbers and wealth. (Exod. 12 : 35. Ps. 105 : 36.)

15. See the fulfilment of this in chap. 25 : 8. The death of Abraham is predicted in one of those remarkable phrases which seem to prove that the Hebrews were not unacquainted with the doctrine of immortality. — *Kalisch*.

16. In the fourth generation. The fourth generations of the Israelites who went down into Egypt should return, and possess Canaan. This was the result. Caleb was the fourth from Judah, Moses from Levi. Or, Isaac, Levi, Amram, Eleazar, may represent the four generations. — *Jacobus*. Generation here means "all the souls then living," so that the sense of the passage was, "In the course of the fourth entire renewal of the living representatives of Abram upon the earth, they shall return," i.e., within four times 120 years. — *Osburn's Monumental Egypt*, vol. ii. pp. 628, 629. Iniquity of the Amorites. The Amorites, the most powerful people in Canaan, are here put for the Canaanites in general. Their state of moral corruption is abundantly manifest in the early chapters of Genesis; and in the divine foreknowledge it was seen that they would add sin to sin, and so at length be destroyed by the divine vengeance. Still the long-suffering of God waited for them, giving time for repentance. — *Cook*.

17. A smoking furnace . . . a burning lamp. A symbol of the presence of Jehovah. See Exod. 3 : 2; 13 : 21. Kurtz regards this as the first appearance of the shechinah, and says, "It is the symbol of the gracious presence of God: the splendor of his glory, the consuming fire of his holiness, which no mere human eye can bear, before which no sinful child of man can stand, is veiled beneath his grace." — *Gosman*. Passed between those pieces. Their passing through the pieces of the victims, and probably consuming them as an accepted sacrifice, are the ratification of the covenant on the part of God, as the dividing and presenting of them were on the part of Abram. — *Murphy*.

18. In that same day. There follows immediately now the solemn declaration, to which all these ceremonies were meant to give effect. Made a covenant. *Cut a covenant*; from the ceremony of dividing the animal in solemn memorial and ratification of it. — *Jacobus*. To estimate the full effect of this awful solemnity upon the mind of Abraham, it should be borne in mind what solemn importance was, in ancient times, attached to oaths and covenants in almost all nations, even those who, in the ordinary intercourse of life, were by no means remarkable for truthfulness. (See Illustrative, I.) — *Kittlo*. Unto thy seed have I given. *I will give*; on which the Jewish doctors very pertinently remark, "He saith not, 'I will give,' but, 'I have given';" and yet Abraham had now begotten no children. But, because the word of the holy blessed God is a *deed*, therefore he thus speaketh. — *Bush*. From the river of Egypt (the Nile) . . . the river Euphrates. These two streams are here used as representative of the two great world-powers between

which Israel should dwell. It is thus a prediction that the descendants of Abram should have an independent existence by the side of these two great empires, and that no nation should have any permanent sway between them and these two empires. So that their dominion may be said to reach from the Euphrates to the Nile. — These two rivers are, moreover, constantly referred to in the later Scriptures, as the extreme boundaries of Israel. In its best days, the Israelitish dominion reached, to all intents, to Egypt, since all or nearly all the intervening powers were subject to David and Solomon. — *Gosman*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On Abraham in Egypt, see Osburn's *Monumental Egypt*, vol. i. pp. 377, 378; and Schaff's *Through Bible Lands*, pp. 90, 91. On the four generations, see Osburn, vol. ii. pp. 626-632. Charles G. Finney's sermon on Isa. 50: 10, on "Faith," is most excellent and helpful. On vers. 15, 16, see sermons by Payson and Saurin. Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **The oath.** — The judicial legislation of the East does at this day recognize a false oath as a moral impossibility; and hence, among some of the most mendacious people in the world, an accusation on oath is held to be true, in the absence of other testimony, and unless the accused will consent to purge himself by a counter oath. Even in ancient Greece, where a lie was a small matter, to distrust an oath seems to have been regarded as a high crime. The same sentiment is indicated in the special judgments from heaven, which were expected to await the breaker of treaties, on the man who had sworn falsely. So, in the *Iliad*, when the truce has been broken by the act of Pandarus, Agamemnon says to the Greeks, —

"Jove will not prosper traitors. Them who first
Transgressed the truth, the vultures shall devour;
And we, their city taken, shall their wives
Lead captive."

We may compare with this the more Oriental notion expressed in the Institutes of Menu: "He whom the blazing fire burns not, whom the water forces not up, or who meets with no speedy misfortune, must be held veracious in his testimony on oath." This implies that God is so sure to punish him who has no regard for his oath, that the absence of punishment is an assurance of truthfulness. — *Kitto*.

II. There is a fable that the aromatic clay said, "I was common clay, till the roses there were planted in me." Abraham's greatness and glory came from the *faith* that was planted in him.

III. **Implicit faith in God's promises.** — One day when Napoleon I. was receiving his troops in Paris, he let fall the reins of his horse, who galloped away, when a common soldier sprang from the ranks, caught the reins, and restored them to the emperor. "Much obliged to you, captain," said Napoleon. "Of what regiment, sir?" immediately replied the soldier. The emperor, pleased with his quickness, said, "Of the guards." He went to the guards dressed as he was, and took his place among the officers, who ridiculed him; but he believed the emperor, for in spite of appearances he *was* a captain. — *Foster's Cyclopædia*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 1. God is our shield, a defence, movable to defend all sides, needed above all other armor.

2. The best of all God's good gifts is himself: it includes all good, strength, comfort, love, blessing.

3. Ver. 5. God helps us to realize his promises by calling in natural illustrations. Nature confirms the Bible.

4. Ver. 6. Faith is the source of righteousness. True faith makes men moral.

5. Faithful love is that which we most desire in our friends: it really includes all, and nothing is good without it.

6. Ver. 7. God's past deliverances, and fulfilments of his promises, are proofs that he will be faithful in the days to come.

7. Ver. 13. God often delays the fulfilment of his promises, to increase our faith.

8. Character grows by living by faith, and not by sight: hence we know little of what the future is to bring.

LESSON IX.—AUGUST 29, 1880.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION.—GEN. 18: 16-33.

TIME.—B. C. 1897. 15 years after events of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Hebron, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.

In Abram's ninety-ninth year (B. C. 1898), Jehovah, appearing to him, renewed the covenant with him in the new character of "*father of many nations*." In sign thereof he changed his name from AB-*RAM* (*exalted father*) to AB-*RAHAM* (*father of a multitude*). ABRAHAM from this time is presented to us in a higher character than before. The more open and familiar intercourse which he enjoys with Jehovah marks him as peculiarly "the friend of God." As Abraham sat at his tent-door, he became aware of the presence of "three *men*," for such they seemed to him; and the same language is continually employed for the appearances of celestial beings in human form. Afterward the chief speaker is denoted, first by the mere pronoun, which is often used when God is meant, and then by the name of JEHOVAH. Doubtless he was the "Angel Jehovah," the "Word of God," through whom God spake to the fathers, and who, when dwelling upon earth in the actual incarnation which such appearances prefigured (Jesus the Christ), declared, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." Abraham offered to the "three men" that hospitality which is commemorated in the apostolic precept: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." He soon learned the dignity of his visitors, when they inquired after Sarah, and rebuked her incredulity by repeating the promise that she should bear Abraham a son, and fixing the time for its fulfilment. They then departed, with their faces toward Sodom; and, as Abraham brought them on the way, he was favored—in consideration of his character as the head of the chosen family, to whom he was to teach God's righteous ways—with a revelation of the judgment coming upon Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins. But the patriarch's faith grasped at another truth,—the privilege of intercession for such sinners.—*William Smith.*

16. ¶ And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.¹

17. And the LORD said, Shall I hide² from Abraham that thing which I do;

18. Seeing that Abraham shall

¹ Acts 15: 3. Rom. 15: 24. 3 John 6. ² Ps. 25: 14. Amos 3: 7. John 15: 15.

EXPLANATORY.

16. And the men rose up. The strangers whom Abraham entertained. He whom the patriarch had instinctively recognized as their chief soon disclosed himself as the Lord himself, JEHOVAH; and the others are in the event seen to be angels.—*Kitto*. See Introduction. Abram went with them. The custom of the East required Abraham to escort his guests a little on their way.—*Kitto*.

17. And the Lord said. The name of "Jehovah" (Lord) is used often, as quite the same with "angel of Jehovah" (angel of the Lord). (See chaps. 16: 7, 11, 13; 18: 14, 17. Exod. 3: 2, 4, 6. Judg. 6: 11, 14, 15, 18, 22, &c.) The angel of the Lord is therefore the God-man Mediator, who, even before he became man in the person of Jesus, was in all ages the light of the world.—*Jacobus*. Shall I hide from Abraham, &c. All the principles of the divine Providence in its relations to the sins of men appear here: his forbearance and patience, his constant notice, the deciding test, and the strictness and righteousness of the judgment; and hence Abraham is told here, that these same principles might operate upon the minds of the people of God in all ages.—*Gosman*.

18. Seeing that Abraham, &c. Abraham is destined to be a great nation and a blessing to all nations; for I have known, i.e., acknowledged him (chosen him, in anticipative love, as in Amos 3: 2. Hos. 13: 4), that he may command his whole posterity to keep the way of Jehovah, to practise justice and righteousness, that all the promises may be fulfilled in them. God then disclosed to Abraham what he was about to do to Sodom

surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed¹ in him?

19. For I know him, that he will command his children² and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may

bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.³

20. And the LORD said, Because the cry⁴ of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,

21. I will go down⁵ now, and see whether they have done altogether

¹ Chap. 12: 3. Ps. 72: 17. Acts 3: 25. Gal. 3: 8. ² Deut. 4: 9, 10; 6: 7. Ps. 78: 5-8. Eph. 6: 4.
³ 1 Sam. 2: 30. ⁴ Chap. 13: 13; 19: 13. ⁵ Chap. 11: 5. Exod. 3: 8.

and Gomorrah, because Jehovah had chosen him to be the father of the people of God, in order that, by instructing his descendants in the fear of God, he might lead them in the paths of righteousness, so that they might become partakers of the promised salvation, and not be overtaken by judgment. The destruction of Sodom and the surrounding cities was to be a permanent memorial, to keep the fate of the ungodly constantly before the mind of Israel. To this end Jehovah explained to Abraham the cause of their destruction in the clearest manner possible, that he might not only be convinced of the justice of the divine government, but might learn, that, when the measure of iniquity was full, no intercession could avert the judgment,—a lesson and a warning to his descendants also.—*Keil*.

19. For. God's plan includes Abraham's fidelity to the covenant; and as it is a household covenant, embracing his seed after him, so it binds him to be a faithful father and householder. This is the process by which God will accomplish his plan of grace, and the means are secured as well as the end. Family religion is God's method for propagating his church. He therefore makes the covenant and its seals of a household nature; and thus the church has always been extended by means of a pious posterity.—*Jacobus*. I know him. Literally, I have known him. That. To the end that, in order that.—*Cook*. It is God's purpose in regard to Abraham, not his knowledge of the character of Abraham, that is spoken of.—*Alford*. Although the promises to Abraham and his seed, and through them to the world, were absolute, yet Abraham's conduct forms an essential part of the plan. We cannot fail to perceive in this language, in what high esteem family-religion is held by God, and should be held by us.—*Bush*. That he will command. No harsh and austere enforcement is here contemplated, but the law of the house is to be religious; not leaving the children to the false principle of making their own choice or of doing as they please in religious things.—*Jacobus*. His household. Not only his children, but his servants and dependents. To do justice and judgment. To do justly and righteously. That which he hath spoken of him. The promises to him and his seed. This domestic fidelity and piety were indispensable to the execution of God's gracious plan. Faithful parents may hope, even against hope, for the covenant blessing on their children; for our trust is not in them, but in God.—*Jacobus*.

20. The cry of Sodom. The cry of sins for vengeance or punishment.—*Lange*. It is applicable to every sin as expressive of the moral demand which it makes for punishment; for every sin has a voice of crimination against the sinner, and its crying intimates the fixed, necessary, and righteous connection (Gen. 4: 10), which is established between transgression and punishment. Sins, however, are more especially said to cry when they are peculiarly heinous, flagrant, and aggravated.—*Bush*. Grievous. Full of grief, causing great sorrow, very aggravated and atrocious.

21. I will go down now. Here the purpose of the covenant angel is stated to go down to Sodom, and inquire into the facts. It is a descent to the plain of the Dead Sea. This is speaking of God after the manner of men; but Jehovah was here in the garb of a man, and the language is therefore appropriate.—*Jacobus*. It implies that he would look into the whole case; that he would be slow before he came to the resolution to inflict vengeance to the uttermost; that he would institute a careful inquiry to see whether what he knew to be bad was incurably bad.—*Bush*. Jehovah could not be uncertain whether the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah contained the truth; but it was still a question whether Sodom, by its conduct against the last deciding visitation of God, would show that its corruption placed it beyond any help or salvation. It must become evident through its last trial, whether it has reached the limit of the long-suffering patience of God.—*Lange*. Whether they have done altogether. Heb., *whether they have made completeness*,—made a finish (of their sins), filled the measure.—*Jacobus*.

according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not,¹ I will know.

22. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

23. ¶ And Abraham² drew near,

and said, Wilt³ thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24. Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous

¹ Josh. 22: 22. Ps. 139: 1. Jer. 17: 10. Luke 16: 15. ² Jer. 30: 21. Heb. 10: 22. Jas. 5: 17. ³ Num. 16: 22.

22. And the men turned their faces. The two angels who accompanied Jehovah, in the form of men. Their departure to Sodom is in fulfilment of the word of Jehovah: "I will know." But Abraham remains standing before Jehovah, upon that height whence the vale of Sodom could be seen (chap. 19: 17), and addresses himself to prayer. — *Lange*.

23. And Abraham drew near. "And Abraham prayed and said," as if his "drawing near" was not merely in a way of local approximation, but also of holy fervency and importunity in prayer. And here commences the most remarkable instance of human intercession to be met with in the whole compass of revelation; one in which the tender and sympathizing benevolence of Abraham on the one hand, and the astonishing clemency and forbearance of Jehovah on the other, are portrayed in colors such as the pencil of inspiration alone could present. The mind of the patriarch would naturally feel for his reckless and ungodly neighbors, over whom such a tremendous doom was impending; but especially for Lot and other righteous men who, he might hope, would be found among them. In these circumstances it might indeed be expected that he would do all that in him lay to avert the evil coming upon them. — *Bush*. Such a union of the yearnings of compassion with the sense of justice and of profound resignation, such a sympathy with the calamities, not only of his own countrymen, but of a foreign and a detested race, must in that distant age be counted (to say the least) as a marvellous anticipation of a higher morality and religion, such as we are accustomed to think peculiarly our own. Read and study that chapter well: we may go much farther and fare much worse, even in modern and Christian times, in seeking a true justification of the ways of God to man. — *Stanley*. Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? See Num. 16: 19-22. Ps. 11: 4-7. Judgments do often come upon a whole community for the sins of a portion, because the separation cannot always be made here, and the final adjustment remains for the *great day of account*. — *Jacobus*. If there had been but the very few righteous that he supposed might be found in Sodom, the place would have been spared at his desire, for their sake, and it had been well for them that they had such an intercessor: how well, then, for us, who have *always* an intercessor at God's right hand on our behalf! — *Kitto*.

24. There be fifty righteous. The appeal is now, that the wicked city may be spared on account of the righteous few. God often spares a community for the sake of a few good men in it. And here the principle is conceded by the Lord. At first the suppliant patriarch names *fifty* as the number who may save Sodom from destruction. He could hope there might be found so many as this. — *Jacobus*. Wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place? From the question proposed by Abraham in the preceding verse, it would appear that he contemplated the preservation of the righteous only, without presuming to hope for the deliverance of the wicked for their sakes. But, pondering further upon the subject, his benevolent feelings, together with his conviction of the divine clemency, seem to have prompted him to widen the scope of his intercession, and to sue for the sparing of the guilty for the sake of the innocent part of the population. — *Bush*. Abraham goes on from step to step; Jehovah grants him step by step, without once going before his requests. He thus draws out from Abraham the measure and intensity of his priestly spirit; while Abraham, on his side, ever wins a clearer insight as to the judgment of God upon Sodom, and as to the condition of Sodom itself. — *Lange*.

25. If I find fifty . . . I will spare all the place. How little do the men of this world know the extent of even their worldly obligations to the righteous! How often has not the Lord spared great cities from plagues, pestilences, famines, — from earthquake, fire, and sword, — for the sake of the little sanctuary he has therein, among those to whom his name is dear! They may be passed unregarded by, in the market and in the street; but they are the salt, they are the leaven, that keeps the mass from corruption. It is for

with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall¹ not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26. And the LORD said,² If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but dust*³ and ashes:

28. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

30. And he said *unto him*, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

31. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

32. And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure⁴ ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.⁵

33. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

¹ Job 8: 3; 34: 17. Ps. 58: 11. ² Isa. 10: 22. Jer. 5: 1. Ezek. 22: 30. ³ Job 4: 19. ⁴ Judg. 6: 39. ⁵ Job 33: 23.

them that a blessing rests upon the place where iniquity abounds; and it is for their sake that the curse and the ruin are averted from it. In the belief that the duty and privilege of intercession is too much neglected among Christians, we do earnestly recommend this case of Abraham's intercession for Sodom to the consideration of the reader. — *Killo*. A number in any nation or city, who stand in the gap by their intercessions and exertions, are a stronger defence than armies, navies, or fortifications. — *Scott*.

27. Dust and ashes. In his origin dust, and ashes at the end. — *Lange*. A mortal speaking to the Eternal.

28. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous, &c. If it be asked why Abraham continued thus to press his suit, abating the number by five, till at length he had reduced it down to ten, the answer perhaps may be, that being in the outset uncertain as to the number of righteous in Sodom, the readiness and facility of Jehovah in yielding to his first petition inspired a doubt whether the specified 50 could be found. This doubt would naturally be increased by every successive concession, each one of which paved the way for the following, till at length he probably deemed it both hopeless and presumptuous to proceed any farther. — *Bush*. Should 45 good men suffer for want of five more?

29-32. A third time, he said: a third time an answer is granted. Let not the Lord be angry. He would fain wrestle in prayer, but would not oppose the divine will. He said. A fourth time the answer is obtained. Behold, now. A thing to be greatly wondered at. And he said. An answer for the fifth time. This once. He would not go beyond this. His human pity had struggled with his sense of right, but it could go no farther. He said. A sixth answer. Ten's sake. So few should indeed save that great city. — *Class and Desk*.

33. Went his way. As he had declared (ver. 21), to go down to Sodom as one of the *three* who had come to Abraham. (1) God granted Abraham's prayer so far as he ventured to extend it. We know not what would have been the answer, had he gone farther. He may have had some intimation that he should proceed no farther (Jer. 7: 16; 11: 14), or by the covenant angel going his way. But (1) we have here the highest encouragement for intercessory prayer, — to plead with God for wicked men, for communities and nations that are far gone in sin. Abraham received no denial. So far as we can see, it was he who left off, and not God. Yet (2) we are to rest humbly and trustfully upon God's good pleasure, after all our prayer. It would seem that there were not even so

many as ten righteous in Sodom. Probably there was only one, and he might justly have been left to perish (Eccles. 9: 2). And yet God went even farther than his promise, and saved Lot's family, which contained, doubtless, all the righteous who were there. Thus he granted Abraham's prayer.—*Jacobus*. There is a secret power in the righteous, that makes them stronger than any outward strength of sin. It is the power of life; as a living seed will push its way through masses of matter thousands of times heavier than the seed; as a little leaven will leaven a large amount of flour. It has been done by Christ, it has been repeated in every age, it is now exemplified on every mission-field, that a few living righteous men may save the whole city.—*P*.

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Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*. Bushnell's *Christian Nurture*, "Parental Gratification," (ver. 19). Sermons by McCheyne; J. F. Tuttle in *National Preacher*, 24; Emmons, vol. ii. (ver. 19), vol. iv. (ver. 25).

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The righteous saving the city.—Dr. Peabody of Harvard University, who stands on the mountain-top of observation on these subjects, said, in his baccalaureate sermon, in 1879, "My friends, I have spoken as I have to-day because I feel profoundly, and more and more so with my long and varied observation and experience, that religious faith and purpose are the only certain safeguards against the growing perils of life. So far as there has been among educated men a decline of loyalty to Christ and his gospel, there has been a decline in those qualities which claim confidence and honor, which insure unblemished reputation, which minister to social well-being, and to the integrity and purity of public life. A non-Christian culture has utterly failed to justify itself in its nurslings. The names on our catalogue which will go down to posterity with enduring lustre are, for the most part, such as have been inscribed in imperishable record among the servants of God, and the followers of Christ. There, above all, I would have your names registered."—*Dr. A. P. Peabody*.

II. Anxiety for the salvation of others.—The author of "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" describes the *Broad Church* and the *Narrow Church*, something on this wise: "The Narrow Church are in the ship's boats of humanity, rowing away with all their might from the great hulk on which are the mass of human beings, who they say are sinking in the waves, and, as they row, are singing, 'We are safe, we are safe.' The Broad Church remain on board, trying to help, and declaring that the hulk will not sink." Now, unconsciously, he has come very near a true definition. It is not those who say that all men will be saved, who are broad: the narrowest people can preach universal salvation. But that is the real *Broad Church* which does most to save all men from sin and hell; has the most missions, most revivals; seeks and prays most earnestly for the good of men, here and hereafter. And that is the *Narrow Church* that does the least for others; that confines its efforts most to the bodies and outward condition of men. True Christianity is ever broad, wide-reaching, seeking the salvation of the world.—*P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. The day of judgment for sin is sure to come.
2. Be careful to entertain strangers, "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
3. Ver. 18. Faithful use of what God has given in the past enables us to receive greater blessings. "A man's praying power is not an arbitrary thing, but the result of long antecedent spiritual processes."—*Henry Allon, D.D.*
4. Ver. 19. Family religion and training are the hope of the world.
5. Ver. 21. God never condemns men hastily or unjustly.
6. Ver. 23. The wicked bring destruction, not only on themselves, but on their innocent friends and neighbors (as seen in crime, intemperance).
7. The only thing that can really destroy an individual or a nation is *sin*.
8. A few righteous men are a mighty preservative power, even among many wicked.
9. The good are not selfish, but are seeking and praying to save all men from destruction.

LESSON X. — SEPTEMBER 5, 1880.

LOT'S ESCAPE FROM SODOM. — GEN. 19 : 12 - 26.

TIME. — B. C. 1897. Immediately after the last lesson.

PLACE. — Sodom, one of the five cities of the plain. Probably located on the southern border of the Dead Sea, about 20 miles from Hebron.

INTRODUCTION.

The nineteenth chapter of Genesis contains the conclusion of the dismal history of the cities of the plain. The guilt of Sodom and Gomorrah had been long ripe for judgment. They may be likened to a tree seared and blasted by the autumn winds, but having a few leaves on the topmost branches withered and dead: the next powerful gust of wind will dash them all to the earth. The doom of Sodom and Gomorrah was already fixed when God spoke with Abraham; but there had been delay, partly for Lot's sake, and partly for divine reasons. The sun rose brightly that morning; but before it had sunk below the western horizon the blood was cold in many a breast that burned with unhallowed fire, and many a pulse had ceased to beat that a few hours before throbbed with selfish passion. — *Robertson*. Two of the three angelic beings arrived at Sodom in the evening — the Covenant Angel being detained as yet with Abraham. They were urged by Lot to accept his hospitality. The vile people of Sodom demanded the strangers to be given up to them for their corrupt indulgence. This disclosed the base immorality of the place; and the angels struck them with blindness, and then announced to Lot the destruction to which Sodom was doomed, and urged him and his family to leave the city. — *Jacobus*. *Lot's character*. The more the reader thinks of Lot, the more difficult his case seems to us. From all that appears in the history, there was nothing very lovely in his character; for even his being eventually saved was more for Abraham's sake than for his own. He appears, from his history, to present to our view a very weak and selfish character. Although still a good man, his moral sense had been weakened by daily intercourse with the ungodly people with whom he had fixed his home; and his reluctance to leave Sodom, and the enormities into which his too easy nature was led after his escape to the mountains, are facts of the same purport, and speak with trumpet-tongue of the danger of this intercourse with sinners. For all that appears in the history, we might have strong fears for this man's state. But St. Peter calls him a just man, and says that while in Sodom "he vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with the filthy conversation of the wicked." This relieves us, by showing that his character was still *substantially* true. But it does not altogether clear him from these imputations. It shows that he had good feelings and perceptions, but was a feeble-spirited man, lacking the strength to act on his own convictions. He was content to mourn over the guilt he saw; and would rather passively sit down amid the certainties of danger and the probabilities of judgment, than rouse himself to one great and energetic effort to be free, and, at whatever sacrifice, depart from the abominable and tainted place. — *Kittó*.

12. ¶ And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place :

13. For we will destroy this place, because the cry¹ of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

¹ Chap. 18 : 20.

EXPLANATORY.

12. Hast thou here any besides? Ten righteous men would have saved the city; but there seems to have been only one. He, however, shall at all events escape; and not only so, but all that belong to him shall be delivered for his sake; or, if otherwise, it shall be their own fault. It shall not be for the want of a proffered opportunity or a faithful warning. Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or whatever he had, are directed to be brought out of the doomed city, which was rapidly approaching the crisis of its fate. That remarkable feature of the divine administration by which the wicked are blessed for the sake of the

14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up,¹ get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city: but he seemed as one that mocked² unto his sons-in-law.

15. ¶ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful³ unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17. ¶ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape⁴ for thy life; look⁵ not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

¹ Num. 16 : 26. Jer. 51 : 6. Rev. 18 : 4. ² Exod. 9 : 21. 2 Chron. 36 : 16. Isa. 28 : 22. Luke 17 : 28.
³ Ps. 34 : 12. Rom. 9 : 16. ⁴ 1 Sam. 19 : 11. 1 Kings 19 : 3. ⁵ Ver. 26.

righteous is here most signally illustrated; for that such were the sons-in-law, is evident from the contemptuous manner in which they received the warning, and the fact that they perished in the perdition of the city. — *Bush*.

14. And Lot went out, and spake to his sons-in-law. In inviting his sons-in-law to join him he manifests such diligence as becomes the sons of God, who ought to labor by all means to rescue their own families from destruction. — *Calvin*. Sons-in-law, which married his daughters. It is commonly thought that his two daughters were betrothed but not yet married; betrothal being sufficient to give the title "son-in-law" or "bridegroom" to their affianced husbands. — *E. Harold Browne, D.D.* It is more likely that he had two daughters at home, and others married to these sons-in-law. As one who mocked. As one who was not in earnest; one that was in jest, exciting groundless fears in sport. — *Bush*. He warns them like a prophet, and advises them like a father, but both in vain: he seems to them as if he mocked, and they do more than seem to him to mock again. — *Bishop Hull*. One can almost imagine that he hears them saying, "What! this entire city to be destroyed! These goodly houses and temples to be overthrown, and sink in flames! These active multitudes to perish in a body, and that by such an unheard-of judgment as a fire rained down from heaven! Incredible! Impossible! Away with such childish bugbears! Mere idle whims conjured up in the brain of a weak, doting old man!" Thus too often is the gospel message spurned and made light of, as if its ministers were playing upon the fears and credulities of their fellow-men. — *Bush*. Doubtless they said, as sinners now often say, "God is too good, too loving, to punish men so cruelly. It cannot be." They forgot that it was *love* that led him to warn and to punish, and the only cruel ones were those who said there was no punishment, and so left them to destruction.

15. And when the morning arose. The morning is the *dawn* (since the sun rose as Lot entered Zoar). The Hebrew root signifies splitting or breaking, the streaks of light breaking up the eastern clouds; and it *arose*, because the dawn advances from the horizon upwards. — *Alford*. Hastened Lot. Lot required to be *hastened, urged*. Indeed, his tardiness was such that the angels even threaten him with the possibility of his being involved in the destruction of the city. It was natural that he should still cleave to his home. — *Jacobus*.

16. While he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand. The original is peculiar and emphatic in its import, leading us to fear that it was not *altogether* a compassionate sympathy that detained his steps. The word properly implies that *he suffered himself to be hindered and embarrassed with distracting cares*, perhaps relative to his property. — *Bush*. The Lord being merciful unto him. How striking was the divine interposition in his favor! How evident is it, that, had he been left to himself, he would have perished in the general overthrow! — *Bush*.

17. He said. Here is a change of person; and we are led to suppose that the one here referred to is no other than Jehovah, the Covenant Angel, who had been detained by the intercession of Abraham. Escape. They were unsafe, even near the city. Look not behind. With the eye, much less the heart. . . . Neither stay thou in all the plain. Lot was to escape from the whole of the devoted region which he had coveted for his own, and where, when he parted from Abraham, he had made his habitation, and sought to

18. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord !

19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified¹ thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life : and I cannot escape to the mountain,² lest some evil take me, and I die.

20. Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one : Oh,³ let me escape thither ! (*is it not a little one?*) and my soul shall live.⁴

21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee⁵ concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22. Haste thee, escape thither ; for I⁶ cannot do any thing till thou be come thither : therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23. ¶ The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brim-

¹ 1 Tim. 2 : 14. ² 1 Sam. 27 : 1. ³ Prov. 3 : 5-7. ⁴ Ps. 119 : 175. Isa. 55 : 3. ⁵ Chap. 4 : 7. Job 42 : 8, 9. Jer. 14 : 10. ⁶ Chap. 32 : 26. Exod. 32 : 10. Deut. 9 : 14. Mark 6 : 5.

enrich himself (13 : 10). — *Browne*. Be not content with being just saved, but make salvation doubly sure. Escape to the mountain. Because the plain would soon be overwhelmed. — *Class and Desk*. The mountains are those of Moab, on the other side of the Dead Sea.

18, 19. I cannot escape to the mountain. Lot, instead of cheerfully obeying the commandment of the Lord, appealed to the great mercy shown to him in the preservation of his life, and to the impossibility of his escaping to the mountains without the evil overtaking him, and entreated therefore that he might be allowed to take refuge in the small and neighboring city, i.e., *Bela*, which received the name of Zoar (chap. 14 : 2) on account of Lot's calling it little. — *Keil*. What a contrast here between Abraham and Lot ! The good man prayed for others, the worldly servant of God prayed foolish prayers for himself.

20. It is a little one. The plea that Zoar should be spared rested on the fact of its smallness. It would not be a passing-by of any great amount of wickedness. — *Alford*.

21. I have accepted thee. His infirmity is not rebuked : his request was granted ; the city was spared for his sake. In this God designed at once to show how much the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails, and at the same time by the result to teach his short-sighted servant how much wiser a part he would have acted had he confided in a childlike manner in God, and fled to the mountains in the first instance. For it is clear from the sequel, v. 30, that his terror would not suffer him to remain in the place he had chosen, but that he was soon glad to take refuge in the very mountains which he had foolishly declined to seek. This instance should fix firmly in our minds the conviction that we can never gain any thing by attempting to improve upon God's appointments. He will choose for us infinitely better than we can for ourselves. Let us learn, moreover, another lesson from this incident. If a petition marked and marred with such faultiness as that of Lot on this occasion still met with a favorable hearing, what efficacy may we conceive to pertain to those prayers which are prompted by a yet more believing spirit, and framed more distinctly in accordance with the revealed will of Heaven ? — *Bush*.

22. The name of the city was called Zoar ; i.e., littleness. The situation of Zoar is uncertain. It is usually placed south of the Dead Sea. It is one of the spots mentioned as bounding Moses' view from Pisgah, (Deut. 34 : 3), and is there connected with "the plain of Jericho." It was near enough to Sodom, however, to allow Lot to reach it between the dawn and sunrise.

24. The Lord rained upon Sodom . . . brimstone and fire. The words are to be understood quite literally, as meaning that brimstone and fire, i.e., burning brimstone, fell from the sky. — *Keil*. Brimstone, i.e., sulphur. Sulphur is one of the most inflammable substances known, and will melt in fire, but not in water. The meaning of the word "sulphur" is the burning or fiery stone. — *Biblical Treasury*. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire" (or burning brimstone). As these cities were situated in the vale of Siddim, which, as the sacred writer informs us, was full of bitumen-pits, many learned men are of opinion that God saw fit to employ natural agencies in effecting the purposes of his will. And it is thought, that, as sulphur exists in the neighboring hills, it might have been ignited by lightning, and poured down like rain upon the vale below. The quantity of pitch already existing in the vale would be set on fire, and thus the cities

stone¹ and fire from the LORD out of heaven :

25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabit-

ants of the cities, and that which grew² upon the ground.

26. ¶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became³ a pillar of salt.

¹ Deut. 29 : 23. Job 18 : 15. Ps. 11 : 6. Isa. 13 : 19. ² Ps. 107 : 34. ³ Luke 17 : 32.

would be destroyed, and the character of the valleys changed. Be this as it may, the statement of the sacred writer is clear, and we may safely interpret it as implying a shower of inflamed sulphur or nitre. At the same time it is evident that the whole plain underwent a simultaneous convulsion, which seems referable to the consequences of bituminous explosion. In accordance with this view, we find the materials, as it were, of this awful visitation near at hand. For, at the present day, sulphur is found on the shores of the Dead Sea, which occupies the site of the cities of the plain; and the Arabs obtain enough from the cliffs to make their own gunpowder.—*H. H.: Biblical Museum*. It is held by *Robinson* (and others, as *De Saulcy*), that these cities of the plain were located on the southern part of the Dead Sea, and are buried under or around that portion of the waters; that the surface of the plain was depressed, or the bottom of the lake heaved up, so as to cause the waters to overflow and cover permanently a larger surface than formerly. *Tacitus* and *Strabo* refer to the current belief that such a catastrophe did occur, and by special divine agency.—*Jacobus*. The history of the catastrophe has not only remained in the inspired record, but is inscribed in the memory of the surrounding tribes by many a local tradition and significant name.—*The Land of Israel, by Rev. H. B. Tristram, M. A.*

25. Those cities. Besides Sodom and Gomorrah, which are chiefly named, were the cities of Admah and Zeboim (Deut. 29 : 23. Comp. Hos. 11 : 8), and all in the valley of Siddim, Zoar alone being exempted. The present area of the Dead Sea is about forty-five miles by eight. It is skirted on the east by mountains; and on the west towards Jerusalem the plain sweeps, for some considerable breadth, towards the bare, bleak hill-sides. On the south part of the lake is the peninsula called *Lisan*, or *the tongue*, about twenty miles from the southern extremity. Along these lower shores is the famous Salt Hill, called by the name of "Usdum" (Sodom). The bed of this portion of the lake is a soft bituminous mud into whose mire the cities may have been sunk and buried out of sight forever.—*Jacobus*. Throughout the Bible this destruction is used as the natural and symbolical expression of eternal punishment and God's judgment on the wicked. The law is written on our own hearts and the world around us. Sin, and you will suffer. As surely as the stone that is thrown up falls down to earth again, so surely does the penalty of an evil act come back, even after the lapse of centuries.—*Robertson*.

26. But his wife looked back. In violation of the command. Her heart yearned for Sodom. . . . From behind. Hence she lingered more than Lot. Pillar of salt. A fearful judgment at once overtook her. She a monument of wrath, and Lot a monument of mercy.—*Class and Desk*. We are not to suppose that she was actually turned into a pillar of salt; but having been killed by the fiery and sulphurous vapor with which the air was filled, and afterwards incrustated with salt, she resembled an actual statue of salt; just as even now, from the saline exhalation of the Dead Sea, objects near it are quickly covered with a crust of salt. When this pillar of salt is mentioned as still in existence, and Josephus professes to have seen it, this legend is probably based upon the pillar-like lumps of salt which are still to be seen at Mount Usdom (Sodom) on the south-western side of the Dead Sea.—*Keil*. What a fearful warning against all self-secure and presumptuous sinners! What a caution against delay! "Almost saved, lost after all." Jesus himself pointed to this sad case for a beacon to all such.—*Jacobus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

On the Dead Sea, and location of Sodom, see *Robinson's Researches*; *Schaff, Through Bible Lands*; *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*; *Bush's and Jacobus' Notes*; *Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations*; sermons by *George Shepherd, Hare (Alton Sermons)*, *S. H. Tyng (Israel of God)*, *Spurgeon (Series 6)*, *McCheyne*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Lot contaminated by Sodom.—The German professor, when his daughter thought it safe to go into doubtful company, handed her a piece of coal. She hesitated

to take it. "But it will not burn you." — "No," said she, "but it will soil my hands and dress." — "So," he replied, "bad company may not destroy you, but it will soil."

II. Bunyan represents his Pilgrim as fleeing from the City of Destruction with his fingers in his ears, and crying, "Life, life!" — *P.*

III. I once saw a picture of an artist sitting on a rock in the ocean, which had been left bare by the retreating tide. There he sat, sketching on his canvas the beautiful scenery around him, sky, and wave, and sea, all unconscious that the tide had turned, had cut him off from the shore, and was rapidly covering the rock on which he sat. The tempest, the waves, the rising sea, were forgotten, so absorbed was he in his picture; nor did he hear his friends calling to him from the shore. Thus men are so absorbed in their pictured visions of worldly joy, in sketching their future plans and hopes, that they forget their danger, will not see the rising storm of sin, or heed the warnings of their friends. — *P.*

IV. About ten years ago a large tract of land (some 40 acres) on the Presumpscot River near Portland, Me., suddenly and silently sank one night to a level 20 feet below its former level, without any convulsion of nature, but by the secret undermining of quicksands. So easily, without any other convulsion, could the plain of Siddim, when burnt out, have sunk beneath the level of the Dead Sea. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. The Lord himself is a willing guest of the consecrated man (Abraham); but the angels hesitate to accept the invitation even of a righteous soul (Lot) if the world is in the heart. — *Gibson.*

2. The righteous are contaminated by dwelling of their own free choice in the society of the wicked.

3. The destruction of the wicked is sure and sudden.

4. But they receive many warnings from God's angels of conscience, sabbaths, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, friends, God's providence.

5. The only safety is to flee to Mount Calvary. There is no safety in the Sodom of sin.

6. Stay not in all the plain, which, though it is outside the city of Destruction, is not on the mountains of safety: as do those who rest (1) in their own morality; (2) in serious thoughtfulness, without faith and love; (3) in good resolutions; (4) in vague hopes that in some way they must be saved.

7. One source of the sinner's punishment is in his own nature, his memory, his conscience.

8. The warnings of the righteous seem a mockery and foolishness to the wicked.

9. Those who pray for what God does not desire them to have may be answered, but there is no blessing in it.

10. Those who look back, regretting the pleasures of the world, will fail of salvation.

LESSON XI. — SEPTEMBER 12, 1880.

TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH. — GEN. 22 : 1-14.

TIME. — About B. C. 1871. 26 years after the last lesson.

PLACE. — Abraham's home was now Beersheba (instead of Hebron), a town on the southern border of Palestine, 45 miles south of Jerusalem. The sacrifice was upon Mount Moriah, afterwards the site of the temple at Jerusalem. It was 45 miles from Beersheba.

CONNECTING HISTORY. — After Abraham had witnessed the destruction of Sodom, he left that region, and went toward the south-west to the country of the Philistines. Here he had the same trouble with Abimelech that he had had in Egypt years before. He finally settled in Beersheba. Isaac his son was born to him. Hagar and her son Ishmael were driven away. Abraham remained here a number of years, till his son was almost grown up.

INTRODUCTION.

In the life of every one there has been one trial, one crisis, to which great issues are attached. Such was the trial we are now to consider, and therefore we call it *the* trial. Not that it was Abraham's only trial, but the chief one; for in truth all his life had been

full of trials. Trial here is indispensable for the purifying of the soul. There is no strength or real goodness of soul except that which is wrought out of circumstances of temptation. It is thus we can understand Abraham's life. In some of these trials he fell, and in others he came off victorious. He was by no means a perfect man. His was a *real* life. Out of failure was organized strength. — God *seems* to have required of Abraham what was *wrong*. He seems to have sanctioned human sacrifice. God did *not* require it. You must take the history as a whole, the conclusion as well as the commencement. The sacrifice of Isaac was commanded at first, and forbidden at the end. Had it ended in Abraham's accomplishing the sacrifice, it would have left on the page of Scripture a dark and painful blot. My reply to God's *seeming* to require human sacrifice is the conclusion of this chapter. God says, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." This is the final decree. Thus human sacrifices were *distinctly* forbidden. He *really* required the surrender of the father's will. He *seemed* to demand the sacrifice of life. — *Robertson*. The question arises, whether we can reverently and worthily conceive that God would command an act so inhuman, and so parallel with the abominable sacrifices of the Canaanites? also, whether, in a case so repugnant to morality, any evidence, even by miracle, could certify Abraham that it was God, and not some deceiving evil power, who was laying such a command upon him? In those days a child belonged to the father, for life or death, by universal custom; and no one would think it strange that a deity should call for the sacrifice of a son or a daughter. The Canaanites offered their infants to Moloch and Baal without waiting for specific command. It might be not without important use to have it demonstrated that Abraham was not less devoted to Jehovah than were the surrounding heathen to their deities. And if this could be thoroughly done, without any actual human sacrifice resulting, in a way to have all the trial of faith, and yet to escape and to condemn the heathen abomination, the experiment would, no doubt, be the wisest thing that could be done in the circumstances. It was not the first, nor second, nor third time that God had specially communicated with him; and he was able to fall back upon an experience of years in connection with many important events of his life, in recognizing the reality of divine revelations, and the wisdom and safety of following them. There is no hint of the least doubt, on his part, whether the command to offer up Isaac came from the same source as the command to leave his native land, and the promise that a son should be born to him. There must have been identical accompanying signs, which assured him, equally in the one case as in the other, that it was Jehovah who spake to him. But no command is found, from Genesis to Revelation, for any one else to imitate this procedure of Abraham. Does the record of the preservation of the three Hebrew youth in the fiery furnace teach that a man may throw himself, when he will, into the flames, with the expectation that God will save him from their power? Are we to infer, from the fact that Jesus bade Peter come to him upon the water, that saints may safely abjure bridges and boats, and cross rivers and seas on foot? — *S. S. Times*.

1. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt¹ Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.

2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah;² and offer him there for a

¹ Deut. 8 : 2. ² Chron. 32 : 31. Heb. 11 : 17. Jas. 1 : 12. ¹ Pet. 1 : 7. ² 2 Chron. 3 : 1.

EXPLANATORY.

1. After these things; i.e., those recorded in chap. 21,—his arrangements with Abimelech, and settling in Beersheba. God did tempt (put to a test or trial) Abraham. Temptation generally signifies no more than trial; any opposition or difficulty that may exercise our graces, and so make them known. In this sense God himself tempts men,—that is, tries and proves them; and thus he tempted Abraham.—*Clio*. To tempt in the usual sense of alluring men to sin, with the desire that they should yield, is what God never does (Jas. 1 : 13). Said unto him. How God manifested himself to Abraham, we are not told; but we may be sure that it was in such a way that there could be no mistake on his part.

2. Take now thy son, thine only son. In more ways than one Isaac might be called his "only son." He was the only son by his wife Sarah; he was the only son of promise, and to whom the promises were given and assured; by the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael he was the only son left to his father's house.—*Brown*. This trial was

burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3. ¶ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid ¹ it upon

¹ John 19: 17.

made under aggravated circumstances. The words in which God's command was couched were those of accumulated keenness. God said, Take now thy son, thine only son; long expected and waited for, thine heir, full of promise and so dear to thee! To subdue the father in the heart, *that* a Roman has done, and calmly signed his son's death-warrant; but to subdue it not with Roman hardness, but with deep trust in God and faith in his providence, saying, It is not hate, but love, that requires this, — this was the nobleness, this the fierce difficulty, of Abraham's sacrifice. — *Robertson*. **Moriah**. "The vision" or "the manifested of Jehovah." In 2 Chron. 3: 1, Solomon is said to have built his temple on Mount Moriah; and Jewish tradition has identified this Mount Moriah of the temple with the mountain in the land of Moriah, on which Abraham was to offer his son. — *Browne*. *Kurts* thinks that Jehovah chose this mountain where the temple-worship was to be established, in order to give divine sanction to the substitution of animals in sacrifice. Yet a further and higher reference was to the event of our Lord's sacrifice in that immediate vicinity; for Calvary was not a distinct mountain by itself, but only a rocky knoll near by. — *Jacobus*. Offer him there for a burnt-offering. The true basis of all morality is obedience to the will of God. Abraham was the special type of trustful, obedient, loving faith. He believed that all which God commanded must be right, and all that he promised must be true. The command, therefore, strange as it was, was but a final test of the firmness of his faith; and his obedience to that command testified that the faith was intelligent as well as unconditional and unwavering. See ver. 5. The conclusion of the history is as clear a condemnation of human sacrifice as the earlier part might have seemed, had it been left incomplete, to sanction it. The intervention of the angel, the substitution of the lamb, the prohibition of the human sacrifice, proved that in no case could such an offering be acceptable to God, even as the crowning evidence of faith, devotion, and self-sacrifice. — *Browne*. Abraham had heard God's voice many times before, and could not have had the first doubt as to its identity. This was the obedience of faith! The wonderful illustration stands out before all the ages, with God's seal of approbation broadly stamped upon it. — *Cowles*.

3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning. To all appearance, and according to human estimates of things, the command carried with it a palpable contradiction of all that had been previously revealed and promised; and there seemed to be no escape for the patriarch from the fearful alternative of either disobeying the command which he had received, or doing an act which was to render the fulfilment of God's promises impossible. To use the words of a very profound and learned divine, "He seemed to be pressed unavoidably with one or the other of the greatest evils in the world, either of them eternally ruinous unto him." He appears to have set himself, without hesitation or delay, to execute the divine command. — *Robert Gordon, D.D.* Saddled his ass. Girded, not saddled him. The ass was destined to bear the wood upon his covering. — *Lange*. Young men. Servants. Clave the wood. He carried the wood with him, because the mountain probably afforded nothing but green shrubs, which would make a very slow fire, and thus prolong the consumption of the victim. To guard against this, Abraham took with him a supply of dry materials, which could be speedily kindled into a flame. — *Bush*.

4. On the third day. Reckoning the distance as 45 miles, if they travelled 15 miles on the first day (partly passed), and 20 miles on the second day, then, allowing ten miles of travel for the third day (in part), they came in sight of the place. Jewish tradition says that the place was indicated by a cloud of glory or a pillar of fire. — *Jacobus*. Calvin supposes that he saw with his eyes the place which he had before seen in mental vision.

5. Come again to you. Had his faith, then, already concluded that God would somehow interpose for Isaac's preservation? "Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." — *Jacobus*.

Isaac his son ; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife : and they went both of them together.

7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father : and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood : but where *is* the lamb for a burnt-offering?

8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb¹ for a burnt-offering : so they went both of them together.

9. And they came to the place which God had told him of ; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order ; and bound² Isaac

his son, and laid³ him on the altar upon the wood.

10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham.⁴ And he said, Here *am* I.

12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for⁵ now I know that thou fearest⁶ God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*, from me.

13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind

¹ John 1 : 29. Rev. 5 : 6. ² Ps. 118 : 27. ³ Heb. 11 : 17. Jas. 2 : 21. ⁴ Exod. 3 : 4. 1 Sam. 3 : 10. ⁵ Mic. 6 : 7, 8. ⁶ Chap. 26 : 5. 1 Sam. 15 : 22. Ps. 25 : 12. Mal. 4 : 2.

6. **Laid it upon Isaac.** Is this a type of our blessed Lord, the New Testament Isaac, bearing his cross?—*Jacobus.* Isaac was not a mere boy, but old enough to carry the amount of wood necessary for the sacrifice, which must have been considerable. Josephus makes him 25 years old; others, older. **Took the fire in his hand.** Caravans carry with them the iron grating for the fire; and sometimes, owing to the difficulty experienced in obtaining a light, the charcoal fire which had been used the previous night was carried suspended by a chain, and kept burning. This may have been the case with Abraham, who had been more than a night on the way to Moriah: he laid the wood on Isaac his son, and took the fire in his hand, most likely that which he had kindled in the chill of the evening before.—*Biblical Treasury.*

7. **Where is the lamb?** Only the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary surpass this; and the antitype is more than the type. How like the inquiry of the great Sacrifice! "He looked, and there was none to help; and he wondered that there was no intercessor."—*Jacobus.*

8. **God will provide himself a lamb.** The faithful father could only put his son upon the same divine trust with himself. It was no evasive answer: this was unworthy of the hero. He can only point his son to God, whose sovereignty is gracious, and whose grace is sovereign. This is the granite pillar of his own hope. The term here rendered *provide* is the same as in the name of the place given by Abraham, Jehovah-jireh, — *God will see.*—*Jacobus.* **So they went both together.** The father in his noble resolve, the son in his trusting simplicity.—*Alford.* See John 3 : 16.

9. **Bound Isaac his son.** Isaac yielded submissively to his father's will, and consented to be bound and sacrificed. Herein he was the true type of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. ii. 23).—*Brownie.*

10. **Took the knife.** Abraham comes now to the point of actually slaying his son; even so far as to raise the fatal knife. So far as his heart and his intent are concerned, he has shown the deed virtually done. Paul shows that it was so regarded by God (Heb. 11 : 17),—"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, *offered up Isaac.*" God judgeth not according to the outward appearance, but looketh on the heart. It is not the act, so much as the will and the purpose of heart, which God regards. He will take the will for the deed, but never the deed for the will.—*Jacobus.*

12. **Lay not thy hand upon the lad.** The sacrifice, the resignation of the will, in the father and the son, was accepted; the literal sacrifice of the act was repelled. On the one hand, the great principle was proclaimed, that mercy is better than sacrifice,—that the sacrifice of self is the highest and holiest offering that God can receive. On the other hand, the inhuman superstitions, towards which the ancient ceremonial of sacrifice was perpetually tending, were condemned, and cast out of the true worship of the Church forever.—*Stanley.*

him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns : and¹ Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh : as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.²

¹ 1 Cor. 10 : 13. ² Cor. 1 : 9, 10. ³ Ps. 22 : 4, 5. Dan. 3 : 17, &c. ⁴ Cor. 1 : 9, 10.

13. Behold . . . a ram. Here occurs the wonderful substitution, in which God set forth as in a figure the plan of the Mosaic economy for the offering of animal victims instead of human sacrifices, — the blood of bulls and of goats instead of human blood, — animal-offerings for the sins of men ; pointing forward to the only acceptable substitute whom they foreshadowed, who is God's Lamb and not man's. — *Jacobus*. The primary doctrines taught are those of *sacrifice* and *substitution*, as the means appointed by God for taking away sin ; and, as co-ordinate with these, the need of the *obedience of faith*, on the part of man, to receive the benefit. A confusion is often made between Isaac and the victim actually offered. Isaac himself is generally viewed as a type of the Son of God, offered for the sins of men ; but Isaac, himself one of the sinful race for whom atonement was to be made, — Isaac, who did not actually suffer death, — was no fit type of Him who "was slain, the just for the unjust." But the animal, not of the human race, which God provided and Abraham offered, was, in the whole history of sacrifice, the recognized type of "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." Isaac is the type of *humanity itself*, devoted to death for sin, and submitting to the sentence. Once more the covenant is renewed in its special blessing to the descendants of Abraham, and in its full spiritual extension to all families of the earth, as the reward of his obedience ; and now, for the first time, God confirmed it with an oath. — *William Smith*.

14. Jehovah-jireh. The Lord will see, or the Lord will provide. God did see the obedience of faith of Abraham. He did provide *then* a ram, and in after-times a *Lamb* as the great sin-offering : who being offered, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. — *Class and Desk*. In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. This became a proverb among the Hebrews, that if any should be in trouble, and should desire the help of the Lord, they should say, "In the mount the Lord will see ;" that is, As he had mercy on Abraham, so will he have mercy on us. — *Jerome*. The passage is undoubtedly meant to inform us that the incident here related was so remarkable, the divine intervention so illustrious, that it gave rise to the well-known proverbial saying, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, an expression of which perhaps the nearest equivalent in English is the familiar apothegm, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." The name thus become a proverb in Israel, not only furnished a memorial of God's goodness to Abraham, but a promise also that when those that trusted in him were reduced to the most trying straits, and no way of extrication appeared, he would interpose at the critical moment, and provide for their deliverance and safety. — *Bush*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Abraham stands conspicuously before us as the man of faith. Yet how often his faith failed him ! Joseph's faith was more universally triumphant than Abraham's. Why, then, is not Joseph held up as the man of faith ? Because Abraham was the Columbus of the voyage of faith. Many a gallant ship has crossed the ocean in grander style than the "Santa Maria" in 1492 ; but, after all, it is to Columbus we look as the man that bridged the Atlantic. And so it is here. Joseph had Abraham's experience behind him, and Isaac's, and Jacob's. Abraham had nothing behind him. He was called out from the world to go forth alone. He was the Columbus of the voyage of faith. So he stands ahead of them all as the *father* of the faithful. — *Gibson*.

II. An ignorant man, when praying once, took the letters of the alphabet, and, laying them down before the Lord, said, "O Lord, I know not what to pray for, but thou knowest. Take these letters, and spell out the prayer I need, and grant me that." So we, like Abraham, do wisest when our desires and prayers are committed to God. We go where he leads, ask what he desires, knowing that God's ways are ever the best ways.

III. There is a legend that Nimrod took Abraham, and cast him into a furnace of fire because he would not worship idols ; but God changed the coals into a bed of roses. So it was with his trial in to-day's lesson : so it will ever be. The obedience that leads to the furnace of fire will find in the end that it is a bed of roses.

PRACTICAL.

1. Life is full of trials : difficulties, afflictions, temptations, are God's tests of what we are.
2. These tests not only make us better, but are like a bell calling men to see the Christian's faith and patience. Abraham might have been full of faith, but the world would never have known it but for his trials.
3. We should devote our choicest and best to God, — our children to his service, our time and our property to his glory. Complete and prompt obedience is the fruit and proof of faith.
4. Ver. 5. There is the closest relation between obedience and worship.
5. The advantage of godly parents is seen in the cheerful obedience and faith of Isaac.
6. The will is taken for the deed.
7. When the difficulties and dangers seem insurmountable, God will provide a way out of them for his children.
8. There are many places in every Christian life which we might well name "Jehovah-jireh," — "the Lord will provide."

FOURTH QUARTER.

From October 3, to December 26.

LESSON I.—OCTOBER 3, 1880.

ISAAC'S PROSPERITY.—GEN. 26: 12-25.

TIME.—B. C. 1804. 67 years after the last lesson. Isaac 92 years old.

PLACES.—*Gerar*, in the land of the Philistines; and *Beersheba*, east of Gerar. Both are on the extreme southern border of Palestine. Before this Isaac dwelt at the well of Lahai Roi, 50 or 60 miles south of Beersheba.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—After the great trial of Abraham's faith on Mount Moriah, God renewed his former promise with emphasis. 10 or 12 years afterwards Sarah died, and was buried near Hebron. Abraham, feeling himself growing old, sent his trusted servant to his kindred in Mesopotamia, to find a wife for Isaac, then 40 years old. He returned with Rebekah. Abraham lived 35 years after this, and then died at the good old age of 175 years, B. C. 1821. God also renewed to Isaac the promise he had formerly given to his father.

INTRODUCTION.

The story of Isaac is brief; his life uneventful, perhaps we might say monotonous. The record shows that the Lord appeared to him on two distinct occasions: at Gerar (Gen. 26: 2-5), renewing the covenant previously made with Abraham, with a very full re-statement of all its salient points; also at Beersheba. We see a point of his character in the fact stated incidentally, that Esau's marriage into Hittite families "was a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah." As to Isaac, one point only is named of him by the writer to the Hebrews in his catalogue of illustrious examples of faith: "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (11: 20). These benedictions (recorded Gen. 27: 28, 29, 33, 37, 39, 40) must be regarded as far more than a venerable father's good wishes,—indeed, as nothing less than prophetic benedictions, words uttered under the divine impulses of the Holy Ghost. Their broad outlook embraced the great outlines of the future history of the two nations that were before him in the person of his two sons.—*Cowles*. We cannot peruse the history without feeling the impression that Isaac was a man of a grave and contemplative character,—little inclined towards any very active or enterprising pursuit, living habitually in the faith and hope of the promise given to Abraham,—and walking humbly and softly, like one who had been solemnly dedicated to God. His devout frame of mind is very clearly set forth when it is said of him, just as an habitual custom might be supposed to be spoken of, that "he went out to meditate," or pray, "in the field at the eventide."—*R. Gordon, D.D.* Isaac seems to have been of a weakly constitution. We read of infirmity or illness in none of the other patriarchs, till they came to their death-beds; but at an age far short of that which his father, and even his son, attained, we find him blind and feeble, confined to his bed, and expecting to die.—*Kittó*. Isaac is tried by a sore famine as his father was, goes out in the direction of Egypt, as the granary of the world, but is not allowed to leave his country, as his father had done; and receives the divine promise made to Abraham, of the land, of large posterity, and of saving blessings for the race. Strangely enough, he resorts to the same expedient among strangers as his father had used, and pretends that Rebekah is his sister.—*Jacobus*.

12. Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold : and the LORD blessed him :

13. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great :

14. For he had possession of flocks,

and possession of herds, and great store of servants : and the Philistines¹ envied him.

15. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

¹ Eccl. 4 : 4.

EXPLANATORY.

12. Then Isaac sowed in that land. The land meant is Gerar, — a city and district on the southernmost borders of Palestine, in the country of the Philistines, and not far from Gaza. During his sojourn in that district he farmed a piece of land, which, by the blessing of God on his skill and industry, was very productive (Isa. 65 : 13. Ps. 37 : 19), and by his plentiful returns he increased so rapidly in wealth and influence that the Philistines, afraid or envious of his prosperity, obliged him to leave the place (Prov. 27 : 4. Eccles. 4 : 4). This may receive illustration from the fact that many Syrian shepherds, at this day, settle for a year or two in a place, rent some ground, in the produce of which they trade with the neighboring market, till the people, through jealousy of their growing substance, refuse to renew their lease, and compel them to remove elsewhere. — *Jamieson*. An hundred-fold. His yield was the largest that is mentioned. The rates of increase vary from 30 to 100 fold. 60 fold is very good, and was not unusual in Palestine. 100 fold was rare, and only in spots of extraordinary fertility. Babylonia, however, yielded 200 and even 300 fold, according to Herodotus. — *Murphy*. The Lord blessed him. Isaac refers all his prosperity, not to his own wisdom or worth, but to the Lord. And rightly, for the most successful men know best how much their success depends on circumstances entirely beyond their control. — *P*. The blessing which descends on posterity in answer to prayer, as the effect of wholesome instructions and a good example, and as a gracious recompense of the obedience of faith, is unspeakably preferable to any other riches which can be left them. — *Scott*.

13. Waxed (grew) great, went forward, and grew. "Went on to grow." "Became increasingly greater." — *Delitisch*.

14. Great store of servants. "Much service." An idiom of frequent occurrence, implying not only the collective body of servants belonging to a thrifty agricultural establishment, but also the various work in tillage, &c., which they performed. The same thing is said of Job 1 : 3. The Philistines. Descendants of Ham, through Mizraim, who peopled Egypt. They migrated, and settled on the south-west coast of Palestine, and became a rich, warlike, active people. Envied him. Isaac's prosperity was not unalloyed. He suffered from envy. Be sure of this, that for every blessing man pays a price. If the world has gained in medical skill, it has lost that simple life which made it unnecessary. If we heap possessions round us, we lose quiet, we get anxiety. Every man pays a price for his advantages, for talents, for property, for high station. — *Robertson*.

15. All the wells. Wells in Palestine were usually excavated from the solid limestone rock, and hence were very difficult to dig, and were costly. Nor was it always easy to find a place where water could be obtained. The Philistines had stopped. A more effective mode of expressing envy or enmity could not well have been devised, as it was, in effect, to destroy the flocks and herds, which could not subsist without water. In those countries a good well of water was a possession of immense value ; and hence in predatory wars it was always an object for either party to fill the wells with earth or sand, in order to distress the enemy. Had the Philistines merely forced their way to these wells, and drank of them, it might have been excused ; but to stop them was an act of downright barbarity, and a gross violation of the treaty of peace which had been made between a former Abimelech and Abraham. But envy considers that which is lost to another as gained to itself, and not only delights in working gratuitous mischief, but will even punish itself in a measure to have the malicious satisfaction of doing a still greater injury to an enemy. — *Bush*. The digging of wells in that country makes a title to unoccupied lands. Abraham had dug wells there ; and Isaac could claim these and the grounds belonging, under the

16. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us : for thou art much¹ mightier than we.

17. ¶ And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18. And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father ; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham : and he

called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours : and he called the name of the well Esek ; because they strove with him.

21. And they digged another well,

¹ Exod. 1 : 9.

covenant made by the former king with his father. But the people filled the wells with rubbish. To cut off the water-supply from an enemy, is victory anywhere. — *Jacobus*.

16. Abimelech. This was the name of several Philistine kings. It is supposed by many to have been a common title of their kings, like that of Pharaoh among the Egyptians, and that of Cæsar and Augustus among the Romans. — *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Go from us. It is not, perhaps, to be inferred, that this request expresses the personal feelings of Abimelech towards Isaac ; but, perceiving the temper of his people, he entreated him quietly to depart. The reason he gave for it was framed perhaps in part to apologize for his people's jealousy, and in part to soften his spirit by a complimentary style of address. Had Isaac been disposed to act upon Abimelech's admission, he might, instead of removing at his request, have resolved to stand his ground, alleging the covenant made with his father, and his own improvements of his lands. — *Bush*.

17. Isaac departed thence. Isaac was a man of peace. Though stronger than his enemies, he yielded his rights, for the sake of peace ; and he found that "the meek shall inherit the earth." — *P*. Pitched his tent. *Encamped*, — referring sometimes to military encamped and to a more settled habitation than the common term for nomadic tenting. The valley of Gerar. Or, the wady, — the undulating land of Gerar (thought to be the modern Wady es Sheriah), — a narrow plain through which runs a stream which would help to supply his need. Dwelt there. This is the term for more settled abode. — *Jacobus*.

18. Digged again the wells of water ; i.e., re-dug ; not returned to Gerar. It is clear, that, wherever Abraham sojourned, he improved the country ; yet it would seem that wherever the Philistines followed him it was their study to mar his improvements. (The righteous ever thus bless and improve the place where they live.) But, as these waters would be doubly sweet to Isaac, from having been first tasted by his beloved father, he resolves to open them again ; and, to show his filial affection still more, he chooses to call them by the same names by which his father had called them, — names which probably carried with them some interesting memorials of the divine favor towards Abraham. — *Bush*. Many of our enjoyments, both civil and religious, are the sweeter for being the fruits of the labor of our fathers ; and, if they have been corrupted by our adversaries since their days, we must restore them to their former purity. — *Fuller*. Called their names. This would appear a trifle among us, because water is so abundant that it is scarcely valued, and nobody thinks of perpetuating his name in the name of a well. But in those deserts, where water is so scarce, and wells and springs are valued more, and as they are there the general permanent monuments of geography, it is also an honor to have given them names. — *Burder*.

19. Digged in the valley. A new well was now dug by Isaac's servants. This was Isaac's right. Of springing water. Heb., *of living waters* ; that is, of running water, rare, and unusually precious for its cool freshness, and for being perennial.

20. The water is ours. The cause of these differences seems to have been, that a question arose whether wells dug by Abraham's and Isaac's people within the territories of Gerar belonged to the people who digged them, or those who enjoyed the territorial right. It is probable that the wells successively sunk by Isaac did not furnish water sufficient for both his own herds and those of Gerar ; and thus the question becomes one of exclusive right. Such questions often lead to bitter and bloody quarrels in the East. — *Bush*. Esek. *Contention, strife, wrangling*.

and strove for that also : and he called the name of it Sitnah.

22. And he removed from thence, and digged another well ; and for that they strove not : and he called the name of it Rehoboth ; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23. And he went up from thence to Beersheba.

24. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father : ¹ fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25. And he ² builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there : and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

¹ Ps. 27 : 1, 3. Isa. 41 : 10 : 51 : 12. ² Chap. 35 : 1.

21. Sitnah. *Hatred, spitefulness.* From the same root with Sitnah is derived Satan, an adversary, or hater.

22. Another well . . . they strove not. Isaac left the valley : there was no longer any such claim possible. — *Alford.* Rehoboth ; *room*, — a name which appears to be preserved in Wady er Ruhaibeh (23 miles south-west of Beersheba), near which is Wady esh Shutein, corresponding to Sitnah. — *Murphy.* He met the envy with patience, and removed from well to well. At last the Philistines desisted. Thus patience wears the world out. Endurance, meekness, the gospel spirit, this is the only true weapon against the world. Hence Christianity can have no addition. It is final. There is nothing beyond this, "Love your enemies." Isaac, like Christ, had conquered by meekness ; and then it was that there was shed abroad in his heart that deep peace, which is most profound in the midst of storm, — "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

23. To Beersheba. Wearied, as he must have been, with such disturbances in the Philistine country, he is all the more ready to go to Beersheba, the border town of the promised land, and the paternal homestead where the covenant blessings had been promised. Here God appeared to Abraham (chap. 20 : 1), and now he again appears here to Isaac (ver. 24), and yet afterwards to Jacob (chap. 46 : 1-4). This place, therefore, was the place of high covenant interest. — *Jacobus.* The very place was full of the memories of the great patriarch. — *Alford.*

24. The Lord appeared unto him. No doubt, by the usual visible symbol of the shechinah. — *Bush.* The God of Abraham. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Therefore he is assured that Abraham is not lost by death, nor God's covenant with him lost. (See chap. 18 : 32, 35, 37, 38.) This is the same person as the Angel of the Covenant, who appeared to Moses in Horeb, in the burning bush (see Exod. 3 : 2), and is therefore the Messiah. Abraham was the man of faith, Isaac was the man of endurance, and Jacob was the man of prayer. — *Jacobus.* Fear not. As a man of peace, unwilling to strive or fight, he may have feared that his enemies would take advantage of his good disposition, and injure him. God bids him to have no fear so long as he is serving God, and doing right. Abraham's sake. This is the actual working of the household covenant. God has so displayed himself in all the history of the Church as a covenant God to the families of his people ; and we may trust God for our children, if we be faithful. — *J.*

25. He builded an altar there. As an expression of his grateful sense of the divine goodness on the present occasion, and as a part of his habitual practice as a pious man. — *Bush.* We are no better than brute beasts, if, contenting ourselves with a natural use of the creatures, we rise not up to the Author ; if, instead of being temples of his praise, we become graves of his benefits. Isaac first built an altar, and then digged a well. — *Trapp.* Pitched his tent there. Here Isaac seems to have fixed his home for most of the remainder of his life (see chap. 28 : 10) : he died, however, at Hebron (chap. 35 : 27), B. C. 1716, aged 180.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. God's blessings. — On the eve of my departure, I declare to you that health is a great blessing ; competence obtained by honorable industry, a great blessing ; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives : but that the greatest blessing, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian. — *S. T. Coleridge, in a letter written two weeks before his death.*

II. Blessing followed by envy.—St. Ambrose, once coming to the house of a nobleman in Tuscany, inquired concerning the state of his host. The nobleman replied, "I have never known adversity; every day hath seen me increasing in fortune, in honors, in possessions. I have a numerous family of sons and daughters, who have never cost me a pang of sorrow; and I have never suffered from sickness or pain." Then Ambrose rose hastily from the table, and said to his companions, "Arise! fly from this roof ere it fall upon us, for the Lord is not here." And scarcely had he left the house, when an earthquake shook the ground, and swallowed up the palace. — *Mrs. Jamieson.*

III. Envy.—Adders have deadly poison in them, which hurts others, but not themselves; but envy is so deadly that it killeth him that hath it, and others also. — *Cowdrey.* Plutarch compares envy to cupping-glasses, which ever draw the worst humors of the body to them. When Momus could find no fault in the face of the picture of Venus, he picked a quarrel with her slipper. — *Foster.* Envy is the shadow that ever follows those who walk in the sunlight. — *Cowdrey.*

IV. Avoiding strife.—Dr. Raleigh told of an old Scotch minister, who, when he came to a peculiarly difficult passage of Scripture, would say to his people, "No doubt, my brethren, there is great difficulty here; all the commentators are agreed upon that: so let us look the difficulty boldly in the face, and—pass on."

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 12. God blesses those who love and trust him.
2. Trials are mingled with the blessings, lest they should injure us.
3. Men are envious of those who have greater advantages than they, though they might have had the same blessings, had they been willing to obey the same God.
4. Vers. 14, 15. Envy is a mean feeling, which leads to any amount of injury if only it may vent its spite.
5. The truly righteous give up even some of the rights they could easily maintain, for the sake of peace.
6. Ver. 18. It is good to hold to the blessed things of the past, tried and proved by the experience of our ancestors.
7. The gospel waters are abundant and free for all.
8. Ver. 25. Good people, like Isaac, first build the altar to God, then pitch their own tents: first the spiritual, religion and education and morals, and then material prosperity.

LESSON II.—OCTOBER 10, 1880.

JACOB AND ESAU.—GEN. 27:22-40.

TIME.—B. C. 1760. 44 years after the last lesson. Isaac 137 years old.

PLACE.—Beersheba, 45 miles south-west of Jerusalem.

CONNECTING HISTORY.—Gen. 25:27-34; 26:34, 35; 27:1-21.

CHRONOLOGY.—Isaac was born B. C. 1896; married Rebekah, B. C. 1857. Jacob and Esau born, B. C. 1838. Esau sold his birthright, B. C. 1805,—32 years old. Jacob received the birthright blessing, B. C. 1760,—77 years old. Isaac died, B. C. 1716,—aged 180. (Dr. Kennicott and Canon Cook place the birthright blessing 20 years earlier, so that he was 57 years old, and Isaac 117. This is probably correct.) Jacob and Esau were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau, the elder, was a mighty hunter. He was a worldly, sensuous, adventurous, but withal a brave, good-natured, and jovial man, ready for any sport or pleasure, no matter at whose cost, and to break, in a jolly, rollicking way, every commandment in the Decalogue. Jacob was a plain farmer, but he inherited from his mother a tendency to sharp practice. He knew by instinct the best end of a bargain. He was a natural-born business man, a splendid talent when joined with conscientious integrity. The selling and buying of the birthright when both were young men, 32 years old, is an illustration of their characters. — *P.* In Jacob and Esau the good and evil are so mingled, that at first we might be at a loss which to follow, which to condemn. But yet, taking the two from first to last, how entirely is the judgment of Scripture and of posterity confirmed by the result of the whole! The mere impulsive hunter vanishes away light as air. The substance, the strength of the chosen family, the true inheritance of the promise of Abraham, was interwoven with the very essence of the character of the "plain man,

dwelling in tents," steady, persevering, moving onward with deliberate settled purpose, through years of suffering and of prosperity, of exile and return, of bereavement and recovery. On the one hand, fickleness, unsteadiness, weakness, want of faith and want of principle, ruin and render useless the noble qualities of the first; and, on the other hand, steadfast purpose, resolute sacrifice of present to future, fixed principle, purify, elevate, turn to lasting good, even the baser qualities of the second. — *Stanley*.

INTRODUCTION.

Esau, returning one day from hunting in a famished state, saw Jacob preparing some red pottage of lentils, and quickly asked for "some of that red, red." His impatience was natural, for food is not readily procured in an Eastern tent, and takes time to prepare. Jacob seized the occasion to obtain Esau's birthright as the price of the meal; and Esau consented with a levity which is marked by the closing words of the narrative, — "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Esau was, by right of birth, the head of the family, its prophet, priest, and king; and no man can renounce such privileges, except as a sacrifice required by God, without "despising" God, who gave them. But more than this: he was the head of the *chosen* family; on him devolved the blessing of Abraham, that "in his seed all families of the earth should be blessed;" and, in despising his birthright, he put himself out of the sacred family, and so became a "*profane* person." His sin must not be overlooked in our indignation at the fraud of Jacob, which, as we shall see presently, brought its own retribution as well as its own gain. Forty-five years passed away, when the approach of age, and the infirmity of his sight, warned Isaac to perform the solemn act by which, as prophet as well as father, he was to hand down the blessing of Abraham to another generation. Of course he designed for Esau the blessing which, once given, was the authoritative and irrevocable act of the patriarchal power; and he desired Esau to prepare a feast of venison for the occasion. Esau was not likely to confess the sale of his birthright, nor could Jacob venture openly to claim the benefit of his trick. Whether Rebekah knew of that transaction, or whether moved by partiality only, she came to the aid of her favorite son, and devised the stratagem by which Jacob obtained his father's blessing (vers. 1-21). — *Smith*. It is a striking legend, that Abraham died on the day that Esau sold his birthright. (Beer's *Leben Abrahams*, 84.) While Esau was hunting for venison, Rebekah disguised Jacob, by covering his smooth hands and neck with goat's hair, to resemble the hairy Esau; and, with two kids cooked like venison, he comes before his blind father, in the name of Esau, to receive the birthright blessing.

22. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.

23. And he discerned him not, because his hands¹ were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

¹ Ver. 16.

EXPLANATORY.

22. **Jacob's voice . . . hands of Esau.** It is remarkably true that every scene of deception, however well planned and artistically managed, fails in some point or other. The ordinary reading or experience of every one will supply examples of this. So, in the present instance, while Rebekah and Jacob had so carefully disguised the outward man of the latter, the necessity of disguising the voice had been wholly overlooked. This single oversight had nearly exploded the entire plot. The suspicions of Isaac were violently awakened at hearing a voice, which he recognized as that of Jacob, speaking in the person of Esau. At the first sound of that voice, he asks, "Who art thou, my son?" and still not satisfied with the assurance, "I am Esau, thy first-born," he says, "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be really my son Esau or not." An alarming moment was that for the deceiver, — a moment of agony, almost a sufficient punishment for his crime, when his father passed his hands over him. "The voice," said the old man, "is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." But he was satisfied: the feel of the hands, and fresh smell of the raiment, prevailed over the misgiving which the voice had awakened; and the much-desired blessing was bestowed. — *Killo*.

23. **His hands were hairy.** In the Eastern countries the goat's hair has often a soft, delicate feel, very much like that upon the human person; so that Isaac might be, without much difficulty, deceived, especially considering that at his advanced age his sense of touch

24. And he said, *Art thou my very son Esau?* And he said,¹ *I am.*

25. And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did

eat : and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27. And he came near, and kissed

¹ 2 Sam. 14 : 5. Prov. 12 : 19, 22. Eph. 4 : 25.

might be nearly as much impaired as that of vision. — *Bochart*. So he blessed him. The deed was done, and could not be revoked. It was not done at this instant, but after eating the venison. If, like Abraham, Rebekah had possessed a faith that would have even lifted the knife to slay her son at the call of duty, trusting in God to raise him up, how much happier would have been the whole company! All of them suffer for this wrong. How the deceiver is recompensed by deceptions practised upon him in the beautiful coat of Joseph! — *Jacobus*.

24. *Art thou my very son Esau?* . . . He said, *I am*. Observe the rapidity and extent of the inward deterioration in Jacob. At first *unable even* to conceive the plan devised by another (vers. 12, 13), he becomes at last *inventive*. At first the acted falsehood, then the lie in so many words. See how he was *forced* by fear, and the necessities of begun guilt, into enormity deeper and deeper of guilt. — *Robertson*. It is impossible to approve of Jacob's conduct in this matter. It was sinister and unfraternal; and it was more, — it was unfaithful. He knew that all he sought had been promised to him by One of whose faithfulness in all his promises he must often have heard from his grandfather. It was therefore his duty to have left the accomplishment to him, in his own time, without seeking to aid, by paltry underhand policies, the purposes of God. — *Kitto*. If Jacob had not done this wrong, would the Lord's promises have failed? Did God need Jacob's sin in order to carry out his plans? God forbid! The work would have been done infinitely better if Jacob had gained his birthright in God's way, and God's time. His sin arose not from faith, but from the imperfection of his faith. And behold the result. Instead of a clean, untarnished blessing from God, they gained a *curse* with the blessing. And it is always so. Whenever we use wrong methods to gain God's blessings, the curse always clings to us. — *P*. And what did Jacob get, who so meanly bought the birthright, and cheated his brother out of the blessing? Trouble in the flesh; vanity and vexation of spirit. He had to flee from his father's house; never to see his mother again; to wander over the deserts to kinsmen, who cheated him as he had cheated others; to serve Laban for 21 years; to crouch miserably, in fear and trembling, as a petitioner for his life, before Esau whom he had wronged, and to be made more ashamed than ever by finding that generous Esau had forgiven and forgotten all; then to see his daughter brought to shame; his sons murderers, plotting against their own brother, his favorite son; to see his gray hairs going down with sorrow to the grave; to confess to Pharaoh, after 120 years of life, that few and evil had been the days of his pilgrimage. . . . Jacob's first notion was like the notion of the heathen in all times, "My God has a special favor for me, therefore I may do what I like. He will prosper me in doing wrong." But God showed him that that was just *not* what he would do for him. He would help and protect him; but only while he was doing *right*. — *Charles Kingsley*.

25. *Venison*; i.e., game. Not used in the ordinary sense of the word, which is the flesh of deer. — *Alford*. He brought it near to him . . . he did eat. There seems to have been some connection between this special act of service, and the conveyance of the blessing. Such covenant solemnities were usually associated with a meal among the Orientals, and it was probably regarded as necessary in this case. The venison (says *Kalisch*) is evidently like a sacrifice offered by the recipient of the blessing, and ratifying the proceedings; and hence Jacob killed and prepared *two* kids of the goats, whereas one would have been more than sufficient for an ordinary meal. This imparted to the transaction in some respects the character of a covenant, — obedience on the one part, and conveyance of the blessing on the other part. — *Jacobus*.

26. Kiss me, my son. A sign of his paternal affection. — *Keil*.

27. Smelled the smell of his raiment. The garments of Esau (see ver. 15) were impregnated with the fragrance of the fields over which he roamed as a hunter; and this circumstance confirmed the patriarch's prejudice. — *Lange*. (See Illustrative, I.) Blessed him. This dying blessing was a matter of infinite importance, connected with the fulfilment of a divine purpose, and was not, therefore, to be pronounced lightly, or without a

him : and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed¹ him, and said; See,² the smell of my son *is* as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed :³

28. Therefore God give thee of the dew⁴ of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine :

29. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee : be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons⁵ bow down to thee : cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed⁶ *be* he that blesseth thee.

30. ¶ And it came to pass, as soon

as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31. And he also had made savory meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou? And he said, I *am* thy son, thy first-born, Esau.

33. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought

¹ Heb. 11 : 20. ² Cant. 4 : 11. Hos. 14 : 6. ³ Heb. 6 : 7. ⁴ Deut. 33 : 13, 28. ⁵ Sam. 1 : 21. Mic. 5 : 7. Ps. 133 : 3. ⁶ Chap. 49 : 8. ⁷ Num. 24 : 9. Zeph. 2 : 8.

divine warrant. It appears, not only from the case before us, but from various others recorded in the Old Testament, that by divine appointment the promise made to Abraham, with all the blessings and privileges which it involved, was suspended, so to speak, on the dying benediction of the patriarch. Of course we are not to suppose that the patriarch possessed any power in himself to dispose of the blessings comprehended in the Abrahamic covenant. He spoke under the guidance of the spirit of prophecy.—*Gordon*. But what was this birthright and blessing which Jacob so greatly coveted, and which his brother so lightly esteemed? The ordinary privilege of the first-born consisted in precedence over the other brothers, and in a double share of the paternal estate. To this, some add, upon doubtful reasoning, the privilege of the priesthood. But the early Jewish writers, who naturally felt much interest on the subject, and were well able to investigate it, think that the privilege which Jacob desired and obtained had nothing to do with present secular advantages, but had reference to that heritage of the promises made to Abraham which was supposed to go to the eldest-born. To be the heir of the promise, to acquire possession of Canaan, to be associated with God in Abraham's covenant, and, under it, to be the instrument of imparting a blessing to all the earth, were matters on which Jacob's thoughts were fixed.—*Kitto*.

28. Give thee of the dew of heaven. This is a chief blessing in Palestine. Rain scarcely falls after the middle of March, until September. Hence the dew is mainly depended on for necessary moisture of the fields, and it is copious. So the dew of Hermon is spoken of by the Psalmist, and the dew upon the mountains of Zion, as an evidence of the divine blessing.—*Jacobus*. The fatness (fruitfulness) of the earth. Plenty of corn (not Indian corn, but *grain*) and wine. Palestine was famous for vineyards, and it produced varieties of corn, viz., wheat, barley, oats, and rye.—*J. F. and B.*

29. Let people serve thee. Here is added a political pre-eminence. He was to be lord not only over his brethren of kindred tribes, by his birthright claim (ver. 37), but also over foreign nations.—*Jacobus*.

32. Who art thou? Jacob's deception is now found out by the return of Esau.

33. Isaac trembled very exceedingly, &c. On the one hand, he could not but feel a degree of just indignation in view of the imposition which had been practised upon him, especially when he remembered the precautions he had taken against being thus deceived; yet, on the other, a moment's reflection would convince him that the transfer of the blessing must have been "of the Lord," and consequently that he had all along been acting against his will in designing to have it otherwise. Two such considerations, rushing on his mind at once, like two impetuous counter-currents coming together, sufficiently account for his feelings, especially when we add his consciousness of the irrevocable nature of the blessing, and the momentous consequences annexed to it. But, while he resents the subtlety of Jacob and the unkindness of Rebekah, he acknowledges and acquiesces in the will of God. The blessing which he had unwittingly pronounced, he deliberately and solemnly confirms :

it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, *and*¹ he shall be blessed.

34. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also,² O my father.

35. And he said, Thy brother came with subtily, and³ hath taken away thy blessing.

36. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and,⁴ behold, now he

hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37. And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and⁵ all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38. And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, *even* me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.⁶

¹ Rom. 11 : 29. ² Prov. 1 : 31. Heb. 12 : 17. ³ 2 Kings 10 : 19. Mal. 2 : 10. 1 Thess. 4 : 6. ⁴ Chap. 25 : 26, 34. ⁵ Ver. 29. ⁶ Sam. 8 : 14. ⁷ Isa. 65 : 14.

"I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed." — *Bush*. The words of the patriarch, spoken in the fulness of divine inspiration, are irrevocable, however obtained. This is one of the mysterious parts of the narrative; but it only represents to us the constant issue of similar successes in life itself. The wrong is done, the prize is thereby won; there is no reversal of the issue; the enjoyment of the prize may be poisoned by the wrong, but the prize itself is of no less value. — *Alford*.

34. Cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry. The language is very emphatic, and describes a poignancy of grief amounting to positive anguish. The time had now come that he bitterly bewailed his folly in despising and throwing away his birthright for so trifling a consideration, — a proof that the visitation of crimes often sleeps for a time, and that vengeance may awake when the misdeed itself is almost forgotten. Still it would appear that in the case of Esau, in the midst of all his regrets, there was no *real contrition*, no godly sorrow of heart, but only disappointment and vexation at his loss. We find at the time no self-condemnation, no confession of his sin; but a severe accusation of his brother, as if *he* only were to blame for what had happened. — *Bush*. Why did he not rather weep to his brother for the pottage, than to Isaac for a blessing? If he had not then sold, he had not needed now to buy. It is just with God to deny us those favors which we were careless in keeping, and which we undervalued in enjoying. These tears are both late and false. — *Bishop Hall*. "Esau found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears." Do not mistake that, as if it meant that Esau, wishing to repent, could not. Clearly, the repentance he sought for was his father's, not his own; repentance in the sense of change of purpose; and all his tears could not alter that purpose, or change the word once passed. He had sowed to the flesh, and expected to reap both the joys of the flesh, and the peace of the spirit. This may not be. We reap as we have sown. — *Robertson*. Esau is held forth as a great example of unavailing regret for spiritual blessings wantonly thrown away. — *Smith*.

35. Thy brother came with subtily; i.e., with deception.

36. Is not he rightly named Jacob? (supplanter.) The words seem to mean, Is there not a connection between the meaning of his name Jacob, and the fact that he thus supplants or outwits me? — *Brown*. Took away my birthright. Esau was not warranted in saying, "He took away my birthright," as though he robbed him of it; for the surrender was his own voluntary act. He parted with it because he practically despised it. — *Bush*. Now my blessing. He only sold the *spiritual* birthright, but expected to keep the *temporal* blessings. He failed, as men usually do in such cases. — *P*. The worst of men wish well to themselves; and even those who profanely sell their birthright seem piously to desire the blessing. Faint desires of happiness, without a right choice of the end and a right use of the means, deceive many, to their ruin. — *Henry*.

37. With corn and wine have I sustained him; i.e., declared that he shall be sustained. — *Bush*.

39, 40. Isaac here at length pronounces the lot of Esau in a form which, as compared

39. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

40. And by thy sword shalt thou

live, and shalt serve¹ thy brother : and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break² his yoke from off thy neck.

¹ Chap. 25 ; 23. Ps. 60 : 9, 10. Obad. 1 : 18-20. ² 2 Kings 8 : 20. 2 Chron. 21 : 8.

with the blessing upon Jacob, makes it "a modified curse," and which is not even described as a blessing, but introduces a disturbing element into Jacob's blessing, — a retribution for the impure means by which he has obtained it. — *Jacobus*. Behold, thy dwelling . . . the fatness of the earth. Heb., *Of or from the fatness*. The preposition is here the same as in Jacob's blessing (ver. 28). But there it is used in a partitive sense, after a verb of giving. Here it is used in a *privative* sense, after a noun of place ; and accordingly it means, *From or without the fatness and the dew*. (So Alford, Bush, and nearly all the commentators give it. — *P*.) And this further appears from what follows. *By thy sword shalt thou live*. And Isaac had complained, also, that he had no more corn or wine to give. The sense is that Esau should have his dwelling in a country opposite to that of the covenant land in these qualities, — a wild and barren country, as it is. — *Jacobus*. Esau was to dwell in the barren land of Idumea, far off from the fertility of his brother's lot. Travellers say, that, notwithstanding some fertile valleys in the eastern parts, Edom is probably "the most desolate and barren upland in the world" (*Seetzen*, cited by *Keil*). — *Alford*.

40. By thy sword shalt thou live. No words could more accurately describe the habits of the inhabitants of Idumea than those of "living by their sword," existing as they do as robbers and free-booters. Witness the perils, to this day, of a visit to Petra. — *Alford*. Shalt serve thy brother. Though Esau was not personally subject to his brother, his posterity were tributary to the Israelites till the reign of Joram, when they revolted, and established a king of their own. — *J. F. and B*. Break his yoke from off thy neck. Between Edom and Israel it was a continual alternation of rebellion, submission, and renewed subjection. Conquered by Saul, subdued by David, repressed by Solomon, restrained after a revolt by Amaziah, they recovered their independence in the time of Ahab. Later they were incorporated into the Jewish State, and furnished it with the dynasty of princes, beginning with Antipater. — *Jacobus*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 58, &c. ; and Gibson's *Ages before Moses*, pp. 181-184, are specially good on the character of Jacob and Esau. Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations* ; Charles Kingsley's *The Gospel of the Pentateuch*, pp. 89-103 ; R. Gordon's *Christ as made known to the Ancient Church*, pp. 149-159 ; *Sermons* by Robertson, Series 5, and A. McClelland.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Ver. 27. The natives of the East are universally fond of having their garments strongly perfumed ; so much so, that Europeans can scarcely bear the smell. They use camphor, civet, sandal-wood, or sandal-oil, and a great variety of strongly-scented waters. It is not common to *salute*, as in England : they simply *smell* each other ; and it is said that some people know their own children by the smell. It is common for a mother or father to say, "Ah, child, thy smell is like the *Sen-Paga-Poo*." The crown of the head is the principal place for smelling. Of an amiable man it is said, "How sweet is the smell of that man ! the smell of his goodness is universal." — *Roberts*.

II. This, I think, is just what the story teaches us concerning God. God chooses Abraham's family to grow into a great nation, and to be a peculiar people. The next question will be, If God favors that family, will he do unjust things to help them ? will he let them do unjust things to help themselves ? The Bible answers positively, No. God will not be unjust, or arbitrary in choosing one man and rejecting another. If he chooses Jacob, it is because Jacob is fit for the work which God wants done. If he rejects Esau, it is because Esau is not fit. It is natural, I know, to pity poor Esau ; but one has no right to do more. One has no right to fancy for a moment that God was arbitrary or hard upon him. Esau is not the sort of man to be the father of a great nation, or of any thing

else great. Greedy, passionate, reckless people like him, without due feeling of religion or of the unseen world, are not the men to govern the world, or help it forward, or to be of use to mankind, or train up their families in justice and wisdom and piety. — *Kingsley*. When you look at the entire lives of Jacob and Esau, respectively, you find, that, while Esau was far better in the beginning, Jacob was far better in the end. There was very good material in Esau's composition ; but what did he make of it ? He sold his birthright. He turned away from God. Instead of going up, he went down. There was very poor material in Jacob's composition, but he accepted God as his God ; and his path, though by no means straight, was nevertheless, in the main, an upward path. So Jacob grew better and better, and rose higher and higher, until we find him, at last, a veritable saint, a noble old man, before he dies. Abraham was a hero ; Isaac was a saint ; but Jacob was a sinner. The biography of Jacob comes closer home to many of us than the history of the others. There are few Abrahams ; not a large number of Isaacs ; but a great many Jacobs, to whom it is most comforting to know, that, however poor stuff we are made of by nature, God can make of us, if only we will yield ourselves to him, 'vessels unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' And are there not times in the history of us all when it is a peculiar support to our faith to be able to call on God as "the God of Jacob" ? — *Gibson*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Doing wrong in order to gain what God has promised, shows a want of faith in God, and ever brings a curse with it.
2. Rebekah and Jacob were severely punished for their deception.
3. The traits of the parents descend to the children.
4. Every one has a birthright from God, to happiness, goodness, and heaven.
5. Men sell their birthrights for a mess of pottage, — for pride, for worldly gain, for honor, for pleasure.
6. Those who sell their spiritual birthright, of character, conscience, heaven, are certain to lose with it the blessings of happiness, peace, and this world.
7. One sin leads to another, — the less to the greater.
8. There is a too late, when men can not, or will not, change, and the chance for goodness and heaven is gone forever.
9. Good men often begin with many infirmities, but gain the victory over them.

LESSON III. — OCTOBER 17, 1880.

JACOB AT BETHEL. — GEN. 28 : 10-22.

TIME. — B. C. 1760. Immediately after the incidents of the last lesson. Jacob was about 77 (or 57 according to Canon Cook and Dr. Kennicott) years old.

PLACE. — A spot near the city of Luz, 12 miles north of Jerusalem, which Jacob named *Bethel*, "the house of God," because of the vision he had there. He was on his way from Beersheba, his home, to *Padan-aram* in Mesopotamia, beyond the Euphrates, whence Abraham had come.

CONNECTION.

Esau hated Jacob for obtaining the birthright blessing in his stead, and determined to kill his brother as soon as his father should die. — To avert the danger, Rebekah sent away Jacob to her family at Haran. Isaac approved the plan, as securing a proper marriage for his son, to whom he repeated the blessing of Abraham, and sent him away to Padan-aram. And so the heir of the promises retraced, as a solitary wanderer, with nothing but the staff he carried, the path by which Abraham had traversed Canaan. Proceeding northward, he lighted on a place, the site doubtless of Abraham's encampment near Bethel, where he found some stones, which probably belonged to the altar set up by Abraham, one of which he made his pillow. Thus forlorn, amid the memorials of the covenant, he was visited by God in a dream. — *Smith*.

10. ¶ And Jacob¹ went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

11. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took

of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12. And he dreamed,² and behold,³ a ladder set up on the earth, and the

¹ Hos. 12: 22. ² Chap. 41: 1. Num. 12: 6. Job 4: 13. ³ John 1: 55. Heb. 1: 14.

EXPLANATORY.

10. Jacob went out from Beersheba, where Isaac and his family had been living. In this journey of Jacob's the chief thing is his conversion, which then took place. Jacob before this time was of the earth, earthy. From henceforth the character of his life is changed; new colors appear in his destiny. This was conversion.—*Robertson*. Great as we may suppose his comfort to have been in receiving his father's pardon and blessing, and rich as were the promises embraced in this paternal benediction, yet it was doubtless with many a bitter pang that he prosecuted his journey. His sin has found him out. He cannot but feel that he has been himself the architect of his present lonely, destitute, and perilous condition. We see him going forth, an alien and a fugitive from that very country, his anxiety to obtain which had formed one motive of his late duplicity! But the lesson which is taught by the patriarch's lot is full of instruction. We cannot but read in it a stern rebuke of that sinister proceeding to which it was owing. Nor can we doubt that the train of thought that now passed through Jacob's mind was of a gloomy and distressful character. Oppressed with a desolating sense of his loneliness, and inwardly pained with the compunctious visitings of his faithful conscience, he must often have asked himself, on his dreary route, "Why am I here?"—a question to which the recollection of his sin would furnish a ready answer.—*Bush*. Toward Haran. Computed to have been at least 450 miles distant from Beersheba. Through a country in many places desert and savage, and in others no less dangerous from hostile tribes. See chap. 11: 31, 32.—*Bush*. The journey from Beersheba to Haran leads the pilgrim through a great part of Canaan, in a direction from south to north, then crossing the Jordan, and passing through Gilead, Bashan, and Damascus, to Mesopotamia. It was the same journey that Abraham and afterwards Eliezer had already made, well known to the patriarchal family.—*Lange*.

11. He lighted upon a certain place. Not after the first day's journey, but after several days' journey (see chap. 22: 4).—*Lange*. The term means, *he fell upon the place*, as the providential stopping-place, incidentally coming upon it or coming up to it, as the lodging-place for the night. This place was about 48 miles from Beersheba, and eight miles north of Jerusalem, near the town of Bethel, and is defined as *the place*, from its being so well known in history. He may have been too late to enter the city, after the time for shutting the gates. It was common and comfortable to sleep out in the open air.—*Jacobus*. He was on the central thoroughfare, on the hard backbone of the mountains of Palestine; the ground was strewn with wide sheets of bare rock; here and there stood up isolated fragments, like ancient Druidical monuments.—*Stanley*. He took of the stones . . . for his pillows. Probably belonging to Abraham's altar.—*Smith*. God's time to visit his people with his comforts is when they are most destitute of other comforts and other comforters: when afflictions in the way of duty abound, then shall consolations so much the more abound.—*Henry*. Often from a pillow of stones come the brightest visions of the soul. From weariness and pain and trouble arise the steps that lead to heaven. Stephen, when stoned by a mob, saw the heaven opened, and Jesus on the right hand of God. Paul from a Roman prison saw his crown of righteousness. Life's Pisgahs and mounts of transfiguration are built of the hard rocks of affliction and trial. This is finely expressed in the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to thee."—*P*.

12. He dreamed . . . behold, a ladder set up. Signifying heaven and earth joined, the gulf bridged over.—*Robertson*. We take the term to mean, instead of "a ladder" in the common acceptation, *a towering elevation, as of several mountains cast up and heaped together in one, with broken irregular sides, composed of ledges of rocks serving as steps or stairs, by which it might be ascended to the top*. Mountains were sometimes termed "ladders." Thus Josephus, speaking of the situation of Ptolemais, says, "It was bounded on the north by a mountain called the Ladder of the Tyrians."—*Bush*. It has been thought by some, that this vision was suggested to Jacob as he lay upon his pillow of stones in the morning twilight, and saw the ranges of hills rising one above another, till the distant

top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13. And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father,¹ and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

14. And thy seed² shall be as the

dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall³ all the families of the earth be blessed.

15. And behold, I *am* with thee, and⁴ will keep⁵ thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again⁶ into this land: for I will not

¹ Chap. 26: 24. Exod. 3: 6. Matt. 22: 32. ² Chap. 23: 16. ³ Chap. 18: 18. ⁴ Josh. 1: 5. Judg. 6: 16.
⁵ Ps. 121: 5-8. ⁶ Chap. 35: 6.

mountains touched the clouds and seemed to join the sky. All dark below, they grew brighter as they rose into the dawning rays, and the farthest peaks gleamed in the morning sunshine. Thus it is all the better picture of the Christian life, which is ever climbing over hills of difficulty, up from the darkness of earth, to the purer light and glory of God.—*P.* The top reached to heaven. Shall your ladder, standing on the earth, reach to heaven? or is your ladder in its whole length flat along the ground? I mean your plans in life: do they really go up, and consciously take hold of the future and the spiritual? Woe be to him who lays out a plan which has nothing in it but this world! Your ladder must be long enough to reach and rest its top in heaven.—*H. W. Beecher.* The angels of God ascending and descending. God would teach him that Jacob's ladder expresses the connecting and living intercourse between heaven and earth. The ladder reaching down from heaven to earth designates the revelations, the words, and promises of God; the ladder reaching upwards from earth to heaven indicates faith, sighs, confession, and prayer. The angels ascending and descending are messengers and the symbols of the reality of a personal intercourse between Jehovah and his people.—*Lange.* This vision of Jacob is the type of a true life. Every right life begins on earth; one end is based on this world; but it reaches to heaven, and every step is a step toward heaven and nearer to God; and all the way there are communications between the heart and God,—prayers and thoughts ascending, answers and influences and helps descending. Thus may life be a "stepping heavenward."—*P.* To us the ladder is Christ, and that in two ways: Christ bridges over heaven and earth by union of the human with the divine, and by him we have access to the Father. I say not, Jacob saw this; but it is so to us, the ladder to us is Christ. Again, to us the angels descending are the intimations God gives us of his Spirit: the angels ascending are our prayers. Again, there is the voice speaking of fatherly protection, of hope, assurance to the end. This is made still clearer to us, for it is in Christ that we are made sons of God.—*Robertson.*

13. The Lord stood above it. Henceforth the covenant God of Jacob, just as he had hitherto been the covenant God of Abraham and Isaac.—*Lange.* And said. That Jacob might be at no loss to know the purport of the vision, he heard the divine voice; and the announcement of his name, together with a renewal of the covenant, and an assurance of personal protection, produced at once the most solemnizing and inspiring effect on his mind.—*J. F. and B.* God is above all; and, moreover, it is his special prerogative to bring good out of evil; and hence, while it is quite true that Jacob was compelled to be an exile from his father's roof, it is equally true that he never could have learnt the meaning of "Bethel" had he been quietly at home. Thus the two sides of the picture are strongly marked in every scene of Jacob's history.—*C. H. M.*

14. And thy seed. Jacob's birthright privilege is here assured to him so that no wrath of Esau could deprive him of it. He promises to him the Holy Land, the numerous offspring, and the overspreading dominion in a world-wide kingdom under the promised seed, which is Christ. And here the covenant promise reaches to the spiritual blessings to come upon all families of the earth by Jesus Christ.—*Jacobus.*

15. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee, &c. I will direct, help, and support thee in a peculiar manner. The Lord assures him, that, however he might be an alien from his father's house, he should not be cast away from his presence, and that he would be his guide and guardian wherever he should go. Why should we not, as the spiritual seed of Jacob, catch a gleam of refreshing light from this assurance as we pass along? If God will be with us, if he will keep us in all places and circumstances, if he will never leave

leave¹ thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

16. ¶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; ² and I knew it not.

17. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! this *is*

none other but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

18. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and poured oil⁴ upon the top of it.

19. And he called the name of that

¹ Heb. 13: 5. ² Exod. 3: 5. Josh. 5: 15. ³ Num. 7: 1.

us nor forsake us, and if he will bring us at last to our promised and hoped-for land of rest, then may we go on our way with confidence and joy. Whoever we may leave, or whatever we may lose, still we part not from our best friend, nor are we deprived of our most valuable portion. We cannot be lonely, if God be with us. We cannot want, if he provide for us. We cannot err, if he guide us. We cannot perish, if he preserve us. And all this he *will* do for those that put their trust in him. — *Bush*.

16. Surely the Lord is in this place. Chal., "In very deed the glory of the Lord dwelleth in this place." Arab., "The light of God is in this place." Jacob's feelings upon awaking were those of grateful wonder mingled with emotions of reverential awe, bordering close upon dread. He had laid him down to sleep, as on common ground; but he found that it was a consecrated place, hallowed by the presence of God himself in this blessed vision of the night. It seemed a lone and uninviting spot, but it had proved to him a magnificent temple. — *Bush*. And I knew it not. Not that the omnipresence of God was unknown to him; but that Jehovah in his condescending mercy should be near to him even here, far away from his father's house and from the places consecrated to his worship, — it was this which he did not know or imagine. — *Keil and Delitsch*. Some chapters beyond the one where this incident is recorded, is a single verse which throws no little light upon this night of the vision. The account here reads as if God, unasked, revealed himself to Jacob in this wonderful way, and we could but guess at the feelings of Jacob on this eventful occasion. But 23 years afterwards he proposes to his family to go to Bethel, and build an altar there to God, "who answered me in the day of my distress." This vision was not a cheap gift because unsought, but an answer to prayer, an answer of God to a soul which looked to the God of his fathers in time of distress, and received a blessing. — *P*.

17. He was afraid . . . How dreadful (full of awe) is this place! The more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling and blushing before him. — *Henry*. The house of God. The place of God's manifestation, where he revealed himself as he was wont to do in his sanctuary. The gate of heaven. Alluding to the ladder or stairway opening to him access to the heavenly world. If it was a ladder for angels to traverse, it was also a ladder for men, the poor, humble, distressed sinner like himself. If it was a ladder for God to come down in the flesh, it was a ladder for men to go up to God, Jehovah at the top. — *Jacobus*. It seems strange, at first thought, that the house of God should be dreadful, and the gate of heaven should fill him with a solemn fear. And yet it is just these places where the great decisions of life are made, — where the gate of heaven is revealed, and the choice is made to enter or refuse, a choice that lays hold on eternity, — that are filled with solemnity and awe. Life and death are in the balance. Two eternities are there, and it is fearful and solemn. — *P*.

18. Took the stone . . . set it up for a pillar. His first act brings to our notice a new and remarkable custom. He takes the stone which had served him for a pillow, and sets it up as a monument, and pours some of his oil upon the top of it. This was an act of consecration. It showed that the spot was to be considered holy. Setting up the stone, merely, was the natural act of one wishing to identify the spot when he came that way again. But the pouring out of oil was at least a formal and devout acknowledgment of the fact commemorated, if it did not, as we think it did, set apart the spot as one hereafter to receive an altar, and to become a place for sacrifices. — *Kutto*. (See Illustrative.)

19. Called the name . . . Bethel. In doing this, he called the place by a new name. It had been called Luz; but he named it Bethel — the house of God; and it is remarkable that the consecrated stones, which in following ages we find among the ancients, bear the analogous name of Baitulia (of the Phœnicians, the *Beit-allah* of Mecca) (*Stanley*). — *Kutto*. Was first called Luz. Some have thought the original name of Bethel was Luz. But this is a mistake. It was close by the city of Luz. We find the name in Josh. 7: 2; 8: 9, 12, 17;

place Beth-el; but the name of that city¹ was called Luz at the first.

20. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and² will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21. So that I come again to my

father's house in peace; then shall the LORD³ be my God :

22. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall⁴ be God's house : and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth⁵ unto thee.

¹ Judg. 1:23, 26. Hos. 12:4. ² 2 Sam. 15:8. ³ Deut. 26:17. ⁴ Chap. 35:7, 14. ⁵ Lev. 27:30.

12:9; but the distinction between Bethel as afterwards settled, and Luz, is marked (16:1, 2); and when the place was assigned to the tribe of Benjamin (18:13, 22) no doubt the new buildings collected round the sacred spot; and, whereas there *had been* Luz, there now was Bethel, occupying virtually the position of the old city, and yet not precisely on the original site. — *Whitney*.

20. **Jacob vowed a vow.** Not satisfied with merely erecting and anointing the memorial pillar, Jacob gives way still further to the promptings of a grateful heart, and binds himself by the solemnity of a vow to be more fully the Lord's than he had ever been before. — *Bush*. If God. This is not making any condition with God, for this is only a recital of the promise, and is more properly rendered, *since — inasmuch as*. It expresses no doubt or contingency. — *Jacobus*. By how much God's favor is better than life, by so much his *being with us*, and *keeping us*, is better than food and raiment. — *Fuller*. From the connection and circumstances, it is clear that Jacob's vow was one of the most unexceptionable character, and such as God approved. The *order* of what he desired is deserving of notice. It corresponds with our Saviour's rule, to seek things of the greatest importance first. — *Bush*. Give me bread to eat, &c. It is worthy of notice, how moderate Jacob's wishes are for himself, — how low the personal ambition of the man who had dared so much for the great future. All that he asks is to be supplied with what is absolutely and indispensably necessary, — food, however hardly earned, so that it sustain life; clothing, however coarse, so that it but cover his nakedness, — so that he may be sure that he shall eventually return in peace to his father's house. What a chapter is this for those who go forth even in our own day, to battle with the world! — *Kitto*.

21. Then shall the Lord be my God. The grand and solemn expression of the soul's free, full, and perpetual acceptance of the Lord to be its own God. — *Murphy*. That is, I will utterly renounce and forsake all the idolatries and superstitions of the surrounding heathen; I will acknowledge, worship, and cleave to Jehovah alone, having no other God before him, and serving him in my own person and in my family, faithfully and reverently, all the days of my life. — Many noted commentators translate thus: "And if the Lord will be my God, then shall this stone be God's house," &c.; but the other rendering seems much better and more natural. — *P*.

22. This stone shall be God's house. A monument of the presence of God among his people, and a symbol of the indwelling of his Spirit in their hearts. As it comes in here it signalizes the grateful and loving welcome and entertainment which God receives from his saints. I will surely give the tenth unto thee. Ten is the whole: a tenth is a share of the whole. The Lord of all receives one share as an acknowledgment of his sovereign right to all. Here it is represented as the full share given to the king who condescends to dwell with his subjects. Thus Jacob opens his heart, his home, and his treasure to God. The spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, has begun to reign in Jacob. — *Murphy*. There is clear evidence that Jacob was now a child of God. He takes God to be his God in covenant, with whom he will live. He goes out in reliance upon the divine promise, and yields himself to the divine control. — *Gosman*. This is the essence of all conversion.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations; *Gibson's Ages before Moses*; *Stanley's Jewish Church*; *Sermons* by H. W. Beecher, vol. ii., Melville, Fuller, Gouldburn, and several in the *Memorial Pulpit*, vol. ii., by C. S. Robinson.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The monument, whatever it was, that was still in after-ages ascribed to the erection of Jacob, must have been, like so many described or seen in other times and countries, a rude copy of the natural features of the place, as at Carnac in Brittany, the cromlechs of Wales and Cornwall, or the walls of Tiryns, where the play of nature and the simplicity of art are almost indistinguishable. In all ages of primitive history such monuments are, if we may so call them, the earliest ecclesiastical edifices. In Greece there were rude stones at Delphi, still visible in the second century, anterior to any temple, and, like the rock of Bethel, anointed with oil by the pilgrims who came thither. In Northern Africa, Arnobius, after his conversion, describes the kind of fascination which had drawn him towards one of those aged stones, streaming and shining with the sacred oil which had been poured upon it. The black stone of the Arabian Caaba reaches back to the remotest antiquity of which history or tradition can speak. — *Stanley.*

II. Jacob's ladder. — 1. Length — reached to heaven. 2. Strength — strong enough to bear the weight of the world if they would go up. Devils and infidels tried to push it down, but they never could stir it yet. 3. Its breadth — enough for all to go together, with no crowding or pushing. 4. The way to get to it: (1) Inquire. (2) Begin at the bottom. (3) Take a step every day. (4) Do not lug the world on your back: it is too heavy. (5) Keep the eye fixed on the hill. (6) Do not pick at others as you go up. (7) Do not fall asleep on the top. (8) Stick fast, or you will be blown off with the winds of temptation. (9) Some have been moping about for years, and never got a step yet. — *Sermon plan of an old Methodist preacher.*

III. That philosopher was a wise man, who, boasting of his garden where he walked and thought, was found by his friends in a very small enclosure. "Is this your boasted garden, — this narrow place?" they said. "Yes," replied he: "it is not very long, or very broad, but oh, it is *wondrous high!*" So may every life, however narrow and hedged in, be wondrous high. — *P.*

IV. As these mountains before Jacob formed to him a ladder to heaven, so certain Bible mountains are typical of the progress of the Christian life, — Mount *Sinai*, with its terrors of law; Mount *Calvary*, with its salvation; Mount *Zion*, type of the Church; the Mount of the *Beatitudes*, Christian culture and principles; the Mount of *Transfiguration*, with its heavenly glory. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 10. Sin makes men wanderers without rest, like Cain or the Wandering Jew.
2. Ver. 11. God is often near us when we do not expect it.
3. The commonest work or place is transfigured by the experiences that reveal heaven to us.
4. Stony pillows of affliction are often the gate of heaven.

"The soul's dark cottage, tattered and decayed,
Lies in new light through chinks which time has made."

5. Ver. 12. Many bad men, who sleep on down, dream of purgatory: here a good man, sleeping on the ground, dreams of heaven. — *Beecher.*
6. Every true life is a rising from earth to heaven, from darkness to light.
7. Every blessed life must be in communication with heaven.
8. Our choicest blessings come in answer to prayer.
9. Ver. 17. Every house of God is meant to be the gate of heaven.
10. The house of God is solemn, because the eternal destiny is influenced there.
11. Ver. 22. Every one who is truly converted devotes his property, as well as his heart, to God.

LESSON IV. — OCTOBER 24, 1880.

JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER. — GEN. 32 : 9-12, 22-30.

TIME. — B. C. 1739. 21 years after the vision at Bethel (or 40 years, according to Kennicott and Cook). Jacob was 97 years old.

PLACE. — Pēnū'ēl or Pēnū'ēl (the face of God), on the north bank of the stream Jab-bok, which enters the Jordan from the east, about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Peniel was at the fords, probably some 15 or 20 miles east of the Jordan.

Jacob as a Sinner feeling the need of
God's help - and having no hope but in
a cry for mercy -

OCTOBER 24.

LESSON IV.

GEN. 32: 9-12, 22-30.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—After his vision at Bethel, Jacob continued his long journey to Mesopotamia. As he approached the town of Haran, he found his cousin Rachel caring for her father's sheep. Rachel was probably 12 or 13 years old (see "Tent-Life in Palestine"). Thus introduced he enters the service of Laban, marries his cousins Rachel and Leah, and in course of time becomes the father of 11 sons, and grows rich in cattle of all kinds, by his shrewdness in outwitting his sharp and dishonest uncle. Here he remained 20 years (Gen. 31: 38, 41), according to the common reckoning. But Dr. Kenicott thinks that the 20 years mentioned in the two verses are not the same years; but the verses should read, "One 20 years I was with thee (i.e., taking care of thy flocks, but not in thy house); another 20 years I was for myself in thy house, serving thee 14 years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle." This would make his stay with Laban 40 years.

INTRODUCTION.

After this long stay, Laban and his sons envy Jacob's prosperity; and Jacob determines to go back to his early home in Beersheba, where his father still lived, though his mother was probably dead. As he approaches Palestine he begins to fear Esau, and sends messengers to him at Edom. They come back with word that Esau is approaching with a band of 400 men. Then Jacob, remembering his wrong, is afraid. He divides all he has into two companies, so that one at least may be safe, and then offers the earnest prayer with which the lesson begins.

9. ¶ And Jacob said, O God¹ of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return² unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and³ of all the truth, which⁴ thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become⁵ two bands.

¹ Ps. 50: 15; 91: 15. ² Chap. 31: 3, 13. ³ Chap. 24: 27. Ps. 86: 5. ⁴ Ps. 61: 7; 85: 10. ⁵ Job 8: 7. Ps. 18: 35.

EXPLANATORY.

9. And Jacob said. This prayer is the first on record, for the intercession of Abraham for Sodom was more of a remonstrance or argument than a prayer. It does not seem that there could be a finer model for a special prayer than this,—the most ancient of all. He first claims his interest in the broad covenant with Abraham and Isaac, just as we might, and indeed ought to, set forth our interests in the mercies covenanted to us in Christ; then he urges the covenant of personal mercies and promises; then he confesses his utter unworthiness of the blessings that have been showered upon him, yet venturing, notwithstanding, to hope deliverance from the danger that lay before him.—*Kitto*. O God of my father Abraham. He pleads the promises. He approaches God as the God of his father, and as such a God in covenant. This was laying hold of the divine faithfulness.—*Bush*. God's covenant with our fathers may be a comfort to us in distress. It has often been so to the Lord's people.—*Henry*. The Lord which saidst unto me, &c. In chap. 31: 3, before he left Laban. He addresses him as his own God, pleading what he had promised to him, as well as to his fathers.—*Bush*.

10. I am not worthy. The Hebrew expression is, little among all the mercies; i.e., too little to have received; less than all.—*Alford*. The truth which thou hast showed. Heb., "which thou hast done." Doing truth is fulfilling in act whatever is promised or commanded in word.—*Bush*. With my staff I passed over this Jordan. He went forth poor and desolate, forlorn and despised: he had no guides, no companions, no attendants, no conveniences for travel, but his staff only.—*Henry*. I am become two bands. (See vers. 7, 8.) I am now become so prosperous as to be able to divide my people and my flocks and herds into two bands.—This division of a party into two bands was a prudential measure often resorted to in caravans, for the greater security of one part at least.—*Jacobus*. Jacob pleads, Lord, thou didst keep me when I went out only with my staff, and had but one life to lose: wilt not thou keep me now that so many are embarked with me?—*Henry*.

11. Deliver me . . . from the hand of my brother, &c. Jacob's fear was not groundless. Rebekah had not called him back. Esau had not intimated that he was recon-

There is a limit of it 213. i.e. sinners' ability in evil
and deceit—

While his fear made him say - I fear Esau
 Conscience made him apprehend - that what he
 ought to say - was - "I fear God" - Hosea says
 he wept and made supplication - When God
 promises man must be faithful to conditions -

GEN. 32:9-12, 22-30

LESSON IV.

FOURTH QUARTER.

11. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.²

12. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

22. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.⁴

23. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24. ¶ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man⁵ with him until the breaking of the day.

¹ Ps. 59: 1, 2. ² Hos. 10: 14. ³ Chap. 28: 13-15. ⁴ Deut. 3: 16. ⁵ Hos. 12: 3, 4.

ciled, or would be easily appeased. The messengers had not brought back any counter-greeting. Esau was coming with his 400 men. Jacob is ill at ease in his conscience, with regard to his offence against Esau. — *Lange*. God designed, by suffering his servant to be pressed for a time with this extreme perplexity, to quicken his fervency in prayer. Conscientious security begets in the best of men a woeful remissness. In order, therefore, to prevent the torpidity which is apt to come over the life of our faith, God is pleased, oftentimes, to suffer us to be harassed with fears. — *Bush*. Smite me. *Me* is here used, in that pregnant sense which is familiar in Scripture, to include his whole clan; as Ishmael, Israel, Edom, often stand for their respective races. — *Murphy*. Smite (or slay) the mother with the children, is probably a Jewish idiom for *leaving nothing remaining*. The literal rendering is, "the mother *upon* the children." Perhaps founded upon what sometimes happens in the sacking of a city, when a devoted mother rushes between her child and death, and is thus massacred *with* or *upon* her offspring. — *Bush*. A proverbial expression for unsparing cruelty, taken from the bird which covers its young to protect them. — *Keil and Delitzsch*.

12. Make thy seed as the sand of the sea. Such a destructive attack as now threatens him would oppose and defeat the divine promise. Faith clings to the promise, and is thus developed. — *Lange*. True prayer presupposes the promise of God, just as truly as it implies the consciousness of wants. Faith, which is the life of prayer, clings to the divine promises, and pleads them. — *Gosman*.

22. Although hoping for aid and safety from the Lord alone, Jacob neglected no means of doing what might help to appease his brother. Having taken up his quarters for the night in the place where he received the tidings of Esau's approach, he selected from his flocks a very respectable present of 550 head of cattle, of different kinds, and sent them in detachments to meet Esau, "as a present from his servant Jacob," who was coming behind. The division into several separate droves, which followed one another at certain intervals, was to serve the purpose of gradually mitigating the wrath of Esau. Superiors are always approached with presents, and the respect expressed is estimated by the quality and amount of the gift. It was a most magnificent present, skilfully arranged and proportioned. The milch camels alone were of immense value; for the she-camels form the principal part of Arab wealth: their milk is a chief article of diet, and in many other respects they are of the greatest use. — *J. F. and B*. He rose up that night, and took his two wives. He took his whole family and all that he had, and sent them over the stream. His party having all safely passed the ford, he himself staid behind . . . purposing to devote the rest of the night to fervent prayer, assured that the most effectual defence he could afford them would be to engage Omnipotence in their behalf. — *Bush*. Over the ford Jabbok ("wrestling stream" — *Stanley*). The Jabbok lies on the east of the Jordan, and takes its rise among the mountains in the south-east of Gilead. It flows with a rapid course for about 50 miles, over a rocky bed, towards the Jordan, which it enters about 40 miles to the south of the Sea of Tiberias. — *Biblical Treasury*.

24. There wrestled a man. This was no dream nor vision, but reality. In Hos. 12: 4, 5, the *man* who wrestled with him is called the *angel*, and the Lord of hosts; and in ver. 30 of this chapter Jacob calls him *God*. Who, then, is the God-man, the Angel of the Covenant, but the eternal Son of God? This wrestling was a real hand-to-hand encounter and struggle, yet not necessarily in the form of common wrestling. The idea is of close, personal, corporeal conflict, in which the issue of physical strength was joined. This is plain from the crippling of the thigh which arrested the conflict, and disabled him. — *Jacobus*. Jacob understood that he was wrestling with no vagrant man, but a messenger of

24 is not a reference -

*The moment Jacob cannot stand alone - he
 require & triumph - the Lord tested his man power
 and showed Jacob - it's vanity - compared with a
 divine touch -*

OCTOBER 24.

LESSON IV.

GEN. 32 : 9 - 12, 22 - 30.

25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26. And he said, Let me go, for

the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let¹ thee go, except thou bless me.

27. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28. And he said, Thy name shall

¹ Luke 18 : 1. 1 Cor. 15 : 58.

God. For the angel seemed to try more to escape than to overcome; and Jacob seemed to feel, "This man has a blessing for me from God. I will not let him go till he gives it."—*P.* The conflict was a repetition in act of the prayer Jacob had offered in words (Hos. 12 : 3, 4).—*Smith.* Why is there need of wrestling with God for gifts he loves to give? The reason is not in God's giving, but in our want of fitness to receive. There must be a hungering, a longing for the best gifts, or they are of no use to us. Books are nothing to those who do not desire knowledge; first the desire must be strengthened, then the gifts can come. Wrestling in prayer is thus the "open-sesame" to the treasures of heaven.—*P.* Jacob was not, indeed, destitute of faith and reliance upon God, but the prominent feature of his character was a strong reliance upon his own resources and strength. He had thus fallen into doubtful and censurable courses. In this confidence he had wrestled with Esau for the birthright, and with Laban for the reward of his wages and his present possessions. God had dealt with him by chastisements. He had been involved in difficulties and trials which he could not well have failed to connect with his sins. Still his fault was not corrected. And now on his return to the land of promise, to inherit the blessing he had so striven to secure, he is met by Esau with his 400 men. He flies to God for help. His prayer gives him relief from his fears; but it does not necessarily wean him from his self-reliance. He must feel that his crimes against men are at the same time sins against God. And to teach him this, and at the same time bring him to unreserved reliance upon God, is the purpose with which God meets him here. The lesson which Jacob here learned reveals its power in his whole after-life.—*Gosman.* Until the breaking of the day. Like Christ, he prayed all night. It is the perseverance of saints by which the blessing comes. This intense, persistent seeking is greatly needed among modern saints. The breaking of the day was a symbol of the new light and blessing to come upon his life, the spiritual sunrise.—*P.*

25. When he (the angel) saw that he prevailed not. He may be said, therefore, not to have prevailed, just as a benevolent man, who is beset by a needy beggar, piteously telling his tale of woe, and clinging to the skirts of his garment, may be said "not to prevail" to cast him off, though possessed of far superior physical strength, because he yields to the kindly impulses of his nature.—*Bush.* Touched the hollow of his thigh. The socket of the hip-joint. The reason of this act of the angel was very probably lest Jacob might think that by his own strength, and not by grace, he had prevailed with God.—*Bible Commentary.* Jacob, true to his character, struggles while life remains, with this new combatant. He touched the socket of his thigh, so that it was wrenched out of joint. The thigh is the pillar of a man's strength, and its joint with the hip the seat of physical force for the wrestler. Let the thigh-bone be thrown out of joint, and the man is utterly disabled. Jacob now finds that this mysterious wrestler has wrested from him, by one touch, all his might, and he can no longer stand alone. Without any support whatever from himself, he hangs upon the conqueror, and in that condition learns by experience the practice of sole reliance on One mightier than himself. This is the turning-point in this strange drama. Henceforth Jacob now feels himself strong, not in himself, but in the Lord.—*Murphy.*

26. Let me go. The time had arrived, the breaking of the day, when Jacob must prepare to meet Esau and to appease his anger. It was for Jacob's sake, not for his own convenience, that the divine wrestler desired to go.—*Bible Commentary.* He thus virtually declares himself vanquished.—*Bush.* I will not . . . except thou bless me. He now knows he is in the hand of a higher power, who can disable and again enable, who can curse and also bless. He knows himself also to be now utterly helpless without the healing, quickening, protecting power of his victor; and, though he die in the effort, he will not let him go without receiving this blessing. Jacob's sense of his total debility and utter defeat is now the secret of his power with his friendly vanquisher. He can overthrow all the prowess of the self-reliant, but he cannot resist the earnest entreaty of the helpless.—*Murphy.* Jacob prevailed, not by his wrestling, as is so often supposed, but by his yielding. Not till he was led fully to realize his own weakness, where he had felt

Man becomes himself - will he have got face to face with God - the name was changed because the character was changed

GEN. 32: 9-12, 22-30. LESSON IV. FOURTH QUARTER.

There was light in the darkness for me more

be called no more Jacob,¹ but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God² and with men,³ and hast prevailed.

29. And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that

thou dost ask⁴ after my name? And he blessed him there.

30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face⁵ to face, and my life is preserved.

We are always face to face with God

¹ Chap. 35: 10. ² Hos. 12: 3, 4. ³ Chap. 31: 24; 33: 4. ⁴ Judg. 13: 18. ⁵ Exod. 24: 11; 33: 20. Deut. 5: 24. Judg. 6: 22.

the strongest, did he have power with God. The great lesson from Jacob's experience at Peniel is not in importunity, but in self-surrender. — *Gibson*. Rather it was *both*.

27. What is thy name? That is, What are you? what is your character? The name implies all there is in a man; as one's name to a note of hand indorses it with all the character, skill, property, integrity, there is in the man. — *P*. He reminds him of his former self. — *Murphy*. And he said, Jacob, i.e., supplanter. He gives his true character, shrewd, tricky, crafty, self-seeking, with none too much of the principle of love in his dealings, ready to take advantage of others.

28. Thy name . . . no more Jacob, but Israel; i.e., a prince of God, in God, with God. In a personal conflict, depending on thyself, thou wert no match for God. But in prayer, depending on another, thou hast prevailed with God and with men. The new name is indicative of the new nature which has now come to its perfection of development in Jacob. — *Murphy*. The effect of this revelation was to change Jacob's character. His name was changed, because he was an altered man. Hitherto there had been something subtle in his character, — a certain cunning and craft. The forgiveness of God 20 years before had not altered this; though Jacob was tender and devout, and grateful to God for pardon. He is brought into contact with the awful God, and his subtlety falls from him. Israel, a larger, more unselfish name, — a larger and more unselfish man. — *Robertson*. There are three acts in this scene: *first*, Jacob wrestling with the Omnipresent in the form of a man, in which he is signally defeated; *second*, Jacob importunately supplicating Jehovah, in which he prevails as a prince of God; *third*, Jacob receiving the blessing of a new name, a new development of spiritual life. **Prevailed**. That is, he received the first answer to his prayer, that he should be delivered from Esau. Now he wants more, even a spiritual blessing.

29. Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. The import of the question undoubtedly extends beyond the mere name. He wished to have a fuller development in words of that divine nature or character which had displayed itself so wonderfully in act. — *Bush*. To tell Jacob the name of God, was to reveal to him what God is, and who. — *Robertson*. It [this scene with its two questions, What is thy name?] represents the twofold problem which lies at the basis of all religion: What is man, and what is God? The human mind cannot but ask, Who art thou? what art thou? Tell us thy name. The first answer we find in the Scriptures is "God," "El," "Elohim," the Strong One, the Strong Ones, the Almighty One. The soul kept on asking, and another name was revealed, "Jehovah," by us translated "Lord," the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Unchangeable, the Invisible. The next new name throughout the Jewish monarchy was "Jehovah Sabaoth," the Eternal "Lord of Hosts," the Guide of human history, the Ruler of principalities and powers. Next the Eternal One came to be known more and more as the Holy One, the Righteous One. Then in the New Testament God is revealed as *Love*. "God is Love." Then God is "Our Father who art in heaven." "Lord, show us the Father," we cry. And the answer is, "He that hath seen, he that hath read of, Jesus Christ, hath seen and read of the Father." This is the full face, — this is the final mode of declaring the name of God. — *Dean Stanley, Sermons in America*. And he blessed him there. We cannot doubt that the patriarch was favored with what was equivalent to a direct and full reply. It is highly probable that there was something in the blessing now imparted which virtually answered his question. He answers by giving him a blessing. This he was doubtless made to experience internally. His mind was sweetly tranquilized. His former fear departed from his soul, as did the shades of night at that very time before the breaking of the day. His heart is strengthened by the secret succors of the God of all grace, which are far more effectual than words or more literal promises. His question was answered in the state of his soul. — *Bush*.

30. Called the name . . . Peniel. Meaning "the face of God." My life is pre-

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in your heart of hearts?

is a confession that I was in no prayer pleasing or dis-
 pleasing unto God? - Heb 4:16-10:22, James 1:5-6 -
 the lesson for us - Jer 18:4:6 - Jer 18:6 - How
 severe is the experience by which it is learned -
 2 Cor 12:7-10.

OCTOBER 24.

LESSON IV.

GEN. 32:9-12, 22-30.

served. The feeling of conscience is, that no sinner can see the infinitely holy God, and live. - *Murphy*. Jacob met Esau, and found him friendly. He settled in Shechem, and afterwards in Bethel. Moving thence, Benjamin was born, and the beloved Rachel died at Bethlehem.

He princely power attained in his hour of great need, not in that of strength.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Dean Stanley's *Sermons in America*, 1879, pp. 71-93, and 200-255; Stanley's *Jewish Church*; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; *Sermons* by Robertson, Series 1, p. 60; *The Memorial Pulpit*, vol. ii, by C. S. Robinson; *Harrow School Sermons*, by I. M. Butler; Wesley's Hymn, "Come, O thou Traveller unknown;" Conder's *Tent Life in Palestine*, vol. ii, pp. 75-103.

It is when a man realizes that he cannot take care of himself that he cries in dead earnest to God, it is then for him -

I. In the athletic exercise of wrestling, the highest effort of corporeal prowess is required. Every nerve and muscle of every limb is called into play, and put to its utmost tension. The whole energy of the frame is concentrated in the act, and the least relaxation perils the issue of the conflict. So, also, in prayer. All the powers of our minds, and all the strongest feelings of our hearts, are to be enlisted in this duty. Precepts, promises, arguments, - whatever can constitute pleas of the most cogent and prevailing nature, should be brought forward. We should "stir ourselves up to take hold on God." - *Bush*.

II. The villages of Winnebourg and Metternich, near Coblenz, are the birthplace and the property of Prince Metternich, the celebrated diplomatist. The family name, says M. Dumas, was originally Metter, but received the addition of the last syllable in the following manner: In one of the great battles of the 15th century, the Emperor of Germany saw an entire regiment take to flight, with the exception of one man, who stood his ground, and defended himself gallantly, till he fell, covered with wounds. The emperor inquired his name. It was Metter. That night, at supper, talking of the regiment in question, he remarked, "They all fled - but Metter *nicht*." Most persons know that *nicht* is the German for "not." The family adopted the additional monosyllable, and hence the origin of the house of Metternich. - *W. F. Crafts*.

III. It is said that when the Westminster divines were forming the famous Westminster Catechism, and came to the question, What is God? they proposed to join in prayer for special light; and, the youngest minister being called on to lead in prayer, he began with the words, "O God, who art a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in thy being, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and truth;" when the whole assembly broke out into the exclamation, "This shall be our definition!"

Get us see to it that our prayer for help is in God's time for helping -

PRACTICAL.

1. This incident is typical of various experiences: on entering a profession; the coming of new thoughts; the wrestling with temptations, doubts, sorrows; the time of conversion; the struggle of death. (See Stanley's *American Sermons*, p. 71, &c.)

2. Ver. 9. God's promises fulfilled to our fathers, an assurance and comfort to us. "Qui transtulit, sustinet."

3. We can best plead God's promises when we are doing God's will.

4. Wrestling importunity in prayer, the condition of receiving the blessing.

5. Prayer should be with the whole nature, words, acts, life, spirit.

6. The answer comes to those who feel their own weakness, and trust, with clinging faith, to God.

7. The prayer for worldly deliverance and blessing leads us to desire greater spiritual blessings, - from prayer for our family, to prayer for the world, from earth to heaven. It is for this reason that God would be inquired of for worldly blessings.

8. Men's characters can be changed, - Jacobs to Israels, - by God's grace, and wrestling prayer.

9. The best of all blessings is to know God.

He who victoriously has in spiritual possessions? What promises can he claim -

LESSON V.—OCTOBER 31, 1880.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.—GEN. 37: 1-5, 23-36.

TIME.—B. C. 1729. Ten years after Jacob's return to Canaan (in our last lesson). Joseph 17 years old, Benjamin less than one.

PLACES.—Jacob's home was at *Hebron*, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. Joseph was sold at *Dothan*, 17 miles from Shechem, and about 70 miles north-east of Hebron, his home.

PLACE IN SECULAR HISTORY.—*Aphophis* was the Pharaoh, or king, of Egypt at this time. He was the last king of the 15th dynasty (one of the Shepherd or Hyksos kings). His name signifies "a giant." He reigned 61 years. *Aphophis* left Egypt by far the richest and most flourishing kingdom that had then appeared upon the earth. It is historically true (from the monuments, and the inscriptions on the tomb of Joseph at Sakkarah), that Joseph was sold into Egypt as a slave, and that he was afterwards prime minister to Pharaoh *Aphophis*.—*Osborn's Monumental Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 90, &c. So nearly all authorities. Wilkinson puts the arrival of Joseph, B. C. 1706, under *Osirtesen I.* of the 16th dynasty.—*Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 30. But they very nearly agree; and there were, about this time, contemporary monarchs, of different dynasties, in Lower and Upper Egypt; probably from the 13th to 17th dynasties. Both may be right.—*Osborn*, ii. 122.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Chap. 33, which follows our last lesson, contains the story of the meeting of Jacob and Esau, which ended in their reconciliation. After this Jacob pursued his journey westward, and crossed the Jordan to Shechem. He afterwards went to Bethel, by the command of God, performing the vows he had there made when he fled from home. While journeying from Bethel to Ephrath (afterwards Bethlehem), Benjamin was born, and Rachel died. At length Jacob reached the encampment of his father Isaac, at the station of Mamre, beside Hebron. Here Isaac died, aged 180; 17 years after Joseph was sold into Egypt, and about the time of his advancement.

CONNECTION.

At Hebron Joseph grew up till he was 17 years old, the youngest son of his father; doubly dear as the youngest, and as the only son of the beloved Rachel; more carefully trained, near the altar of his fathers, than the older sons in the worldly family of Laban, in Padan-aram.

1. And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger,¹ in the land of Canaan.

2. These *are* the generations of

Jacob. Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of

¹ Chaps. 17: 8; 23: 4; 28: 4; 36: 7. Heb. 11: 9-16.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger; i.e., a sojourner. Father is used collectively. The patriarch was at this time at Mamre in the valley of Hebron; and his dwelling there was continued in the same manner, and prompted by the same motives, as that of Abraham and Isaac (Heb. 11: 13).—*J. F. and B. Canaan*. The fourth son of Ham, progenitor of the Phœnicians, who ruled Palestine at this time.

2. These are the generations; i.e., the family history. Many of the preceding chapters had been occupied by the history of Jacob and his sons; but Jacob's *toledoth* (generations, family histories) begin at this point, because he now had become the sole head and father of the chosen seed. It continues till his death in chap. 50.—*Canon Cook*. Joseph *being* seventeen years old. In chap. 41: 46, he is mentioned as 30 years old. His captivity, therefore, lasted about 13 years. *Was* feeding the flock. At this age of 17 Joseph became a shepherd with his brethren. Jacob did not send his favorite son too early to the herds; yet, though the favorite, he was to begin to serve below (not over) the rest as a shepherd-boy. At this age, however, Joseph had great naïveness and sim-

Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.¹

3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son² of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colors.³

4. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him,⁴ and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5. ¶ And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

¹ 1 Sam. 2: 22-24. 1 Cor. 1: 11; 5: 1. ² Chap. 44: 20. ³ Judg. 5: 30. ⁴ 2 Sam. 13: 18. Ezek. 16: 16.

⁵ Chap. 49: 23. Ps. 38: 19; 69: 4. Tit. 3: 3.

plicity. On the other hand, however, he was very sedate: he was not enticed, therefore, by the evil example of some of his brethren. — *Lange*. The sons of Bilhah . . . and Zilpah. The slave-wives of Jacob. The sons of Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali; of Zilpah, Gad and Asher. They were nearer Joseph's age than the sons of Leah. The reader of Gen. 34 and 35 and 37 and 38 will see that the ten older brethren of Joseph were "hard boys." Especially do the worst elements of depraved character appear in their treatment of their younger brother Joseph. Joseph had been trained in a religious home — which seems scarcely to have been the case with the ten older sons. Their shepherd life took them into distant parts of the country, and seems practically to have removed them much of the time from home and its domestic influences. Unfortunately the domestic influences of that polygamous home were by no means so wholesome as a religious home ought to furnish. Envy and jealousy were stimulated into fearful strength. — *Coules*. Their evil report. The evil report of them, — of their doings. This was no backbiting, but a filial, confidential report to his father, showing his love of truth and right, and his unwillingness to be partaker of others' sins. — *Jacobus*.

3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. Because he was the son of his best-loved wife, and of his old age; as Benjamin had not yet come into much notice (being only about one year old). — *Murphy*. Also because of his loveliness and virtue. — *Jacobus*. Made him a coat of many colors, or "pieces." This expression occurs again, 2 Sam. 13: 18, of the garment worn by kings' daughters. Another interpretation is, that, whereas the ordinary garment for youth in the East is simply a body-coat without sleeves, reaching to the knees, this was with sleeves and reaching to the feet. (So Josephus). — *Alford*. A long tunic with sleeves, worn by youths and maidens of the richer class. Its name seems to signify a tunic reaching to the extremities. — *W. Smith*. It may have been both long and of many pieces and colors. — In the well-known scene from the tomb of Chnoumhotep at Beni Hassan, a tomb of the 12th dynasty, the Semitic visitors who are offering presents to the governor are dressed in robes of rich coloring, apparently formed of separate small pieces or patches sewn together. It has been thought by some, that Jacob in his anger at the sins of his elder sons, especially of Reuben his first-born, and in his partiality for Joseph, the first-born of Rachel, designed to give him the right of primogeniture; that this robe was the token of birthright, and perhaps even designating the priestly office of the head of the family. — *Browne*. The colored dresses, in the Egyptian paintings, worn by women of rank and by deities, much resemble our modern chintzes in the style of their patterns, but were of linen instead of calico. — *Wilkinson*.

4. Could not speak peaceably. Did not say "Peace be to thee," the usual expression of good wishes amongst friends and acquaintances. It is deemed a sacred duty to give all this form of salutation; and the withholding of it is an unmistakable sign of dislike or secret hostility. The habitual refusal of Joseph's brethren, therefore, to meet him with "the salaam," showed how ill-disposed they were towards him.

5. Joseph dreamed a dream. Jacob's partiality in giving Joseph the coat of many colors might have passed. But the lad began to have dreams of distinction and honor, confirmatory of the pre-eminence with which his father's partiality had seemed to invest him. These dreams were symbolical. The brethren were binding sheaves in the field, when their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, or fell to the ground while his remained erect. Another dream was stronger still: the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars did obeisance to him. — *Kitto*. Told it his brethren. Whether Joseph acted wisely in telling his dream, may be questioned; but it was evidently done in all the simplicity of a child-like heart, without the remotest idea of inflaming a resentment already too strong. — *Bush*. He probably thought that he would thereby win their confidence, and disarm their hate. The relating of his dreams was one of the links in the chain of events, which, in the end, led to their accomplishment. — *Rev. Thornley Smith*. They hated him yet the more.

23. ¶ And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out¹ of his coat, *his coat of many colors*² that *was* on him;

24. And they took him, and cast

him into a pit:³ and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25. And they sat down to eat bread:⁴ and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites⁵ came from Gilead;

¹ Matt. 27: 28. ² Ver. 3. ³ Ps. 35: 7. ⁴ Prov. 30: 20. Amos 6: 6. ⁵ Vers. 28, 36.

The scope of the dream evidently pointed to some kind of future advancement and ascendancy destined for Joseph; and it is not unlikely that his brethren had a secret persuasion that it was prophetic. The idea, therefore, that God, as well as Jacob, had determined to honor him, provoked them the more. — *Bush*. By dreams and visions of the night God was accustomed, in former ages, to convey to his servants intimations of his will and their future lot. Joseph was to pass through scenes of bondage and of suffering, and these dreams were designed to comfort him in his distress. Often would he advert to them. When carried into a foreign land, and cast into a gloomy prison, they would frequently come to his recollection, and would furnish to him at least a ray of hope that a brighter day would dawn. — *Thornley Smith*.

23. When Joseph was come unto his brethren. Jacob had bought land in Shechem, and hither his flocks were sent for pasture at the proper season. It was over 50 miles from Hebron (chap. 33: 19), and nearly 20 hours' travel. The vale also was well watered. Jacob sent Joseph thither to inquire after the welfare of his brothers. Not finding the brothers at Shechem, Joseph goes on in search of them, expecting, doubtless, to find them near. He is met by a stranger, who gives him the information he seeks; for he had heard them say, *Let us go to Dothan*, which was 12 Roman miles north of Samaria (Sebaste), and about 17 miles north of Shechem. To this spot Joseph hastens on; and when the brothers saw him coming they conspired against him to kill him, and were only prevented by Reuben. They stripped Joseph. It would not be easy to find a parallel in history to the cruel intentions and the cruel conduct of Joseph's brethren. Where shall we find nine men conspiring at once to kill a brother, — a brother whose amiable qualities deserved their warmest love, — a brother who was in the very act of showing his love to them at the time when their fury broke loose upon him! — *Bush*. *Envy* is capable of the meanest of crimes, as it is itself the meanest of feelings; and, the better its object, the meaner and more intense its feeling against it. Out of his coat . . . that was on him. According to Eastern habits, it would be his only garment (except a cloth around the loins). He entered Egypt naked, as was the custom with slaves and captives (Isa. 20: 4), in strange contrast to his subsequent array of pomp (chap. 41: 42). — *Alford*.

24. Cast him into a pit. An empty cistern or reservoir dug in the ground, in which the rain-water is collected, of which there are many in the Arabian deserts. — *Rosenmuller*. There are thousands of these ancient cisterns in Upper Galilee, where Josephus says there were 240 cities in his day, and the site of every one was pierced like a honeycomb with them. — *Land and Book*. Such pits or cisterns were often used in the East instead of prisons, so that the Hebrew word signifies both a pit and a prison. (See Jer. 38: 6. Ps. 40: 2.) This verse is apparently referred to by Zech. 9: 11, in a prophecy of the Messiah. Joseph has been recognized by most Christian interpreters as a type of Christ: in his father's love for him, in his being sent to his brethren, rejected by them, sold to the Gentiles, delivered to death; in the sanctity of his life, in his humiliation, in his exaltation to be a prince and a Saviour: the counsels of his brethren to prevent the fulfilment of his dreams, like the counsels of the Jews to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning Jesus, only served to bring about God's counsels. — *Brown*.

25. They sat down to eat bread. In order to stifle the workings of conscience in their bosoms, Joseph's brethren probably sat down to a joyous feast, eating, drinking, and making merry, regardless of the tears and anguish of the victim of their envy. — *Bush*. His cries for mercy they remembered many years afterwards (chap. 42: 21). — *Lange*. A company of Ishmaelites. A travelling company or "caravan." In vers. 25 and 28 they are called *Ishmaelites*; in vers. 28 and 36, *Midianites*. The former seems to be a generic name, equivalent to Arabs; the latter denoting the tribe to which the merchants actually belonged. — *W. Smith*. Ishmael was a son of Abraham by Hagar. Came from Gilead. A country on the east of the Jordan, which took its name from a group of mountains so called, extending from Mount Hermon to the south of the brooks Jabbok and Arnon. — *T. Smith*. Spicery. From India. A species of resinous gum called storax, — a per-

with their camels bearing spicery and balm¹ and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal² his blood?

27. Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand³ be upon him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh: and his brethren were content.

28. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen;⁴ and they drew

and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph⁵ to the Ishmaelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29. ¶ And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he rent⁶ his clothes.

30. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child *is* not;⁷ and I, whither shall I go?

31. And they took Joseph's coat, and killed⁸ a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood:

¹ Jer. 8: 22. ² Chap. 4: 10. Job 16: 18. ³ 1 Sam. 18: 17. ⁴ Sam. 12: 9. ⁵ Judg. 6: 3. ⁶ Ps. 105: 17. Zech. 11: 12. Matt. 27: 9. Acts 7: 9. ⁷ Num. 14: 6. Judg. 11: 35. Job 1: 20. ⁸ Chap. 42: 13, 36. Jer. 31: 15. ⁹ Ver. 23.

fume. Balm. Balm of Gilead, the juice of the balsam-tree, a native of Gilead. It has always been highly esteemed in the East as a cure for wounds. Myrrh. *Ladanum*, the resin of the cistus-rose, an Arabic gum of a strong, fragrant smell. It was burned in the temple, and employed in embalming. Trading in the produce of Arabia and India, they were in the regular course of traffic on their way to Egypt. — *J. F. and B.* That Egypt was their market, agrees with the testimony of classic historians, as *Homer* and *Herodotus*, who tell us that Egypt was a storehouse for drugs, and a seat of physicians. Od. iv. : 228, 231. Herod. 2: 84; 3: 1, 129. — *Jacobus.*

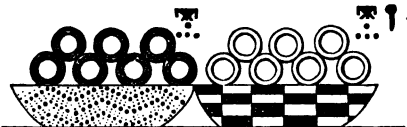
26. Judah said, &c. Judah, relenting, and revolting perhaps from the crime of fratricide, proposes to sell Joseph to the merchants. What profit. Knowing their character, he appeals to the motive most likely to influence them. Besides, the selling would accomplish their purpose, and yet save their conscience from the guilt of murder.

28. Sold Joseph . . . for twenty pieces of silver. The money was probably in rings or pieces (shekels), and silver is always mentioned in the records of that early age before gold, on account of its rarity. The whole sum, if in shekel weight, did not exceed three pounds (\$15). — *J. F. and B.* This is the rate at which Moses estimates a male from five to 20 years old (Lev. 27: 5). A man-servant was valued by him at 30 shekels (Exod. 21: 32). — *Murphy.* It is supposed by many, that silver was at that time of much greater relative value than it now is, and that therefore a much larger price than this appears to be was given for Joseph. — *T. Smith.*

29. Reuben returned unto the pit. Reuben had planned to rescue Joseph, and send him home safely, as soon as his brothers had left him. He probably went into another part of the field to draw off the rest. When he returned he found his brother gone. — *P.* The business was settled during Reuben's absence; probably because his brethren suspected that he intended to rescue Joseph. — *Keil.* He rent his clothes. A token of great grief (see on ver. 34).

30. The child is not . . . whither shall I go? i.e., what will become of me? How shall I account to his father for his disappearance? But Reuben, though thus affected at the moment, had not courage afterwards to disclose the crime committed by his brothers. — *Biblical Museum.* To Reuben, and him alone, the preservation of Joseph's life appears to have been due. His anguish at the disappearance of his brother, and his frustration of his kindly artifice for delivering him, his recollection of the minute details of the painful scene many years afterwards (42: 22), testify that he had a warm and (for those rough times) a kindly nature, — ardent, impetuous, unbalanced, but not ungenerous; not crafty and cruel as were Simeon and Levi. — *George Grove.*

31. They took Joseph's coat. One transgression gives birth to another. With the consciousness that tried to conceal their guilt, there mingles the old grudge concerning the



EGYPTIAN BASKETS OF MONEY, IN RINGS OF GOLD AND SILVER. (Wilkinson.)

32. And they sent the coat of *many* colors, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

33. And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured¹ him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth² upon his loins,

and mourned for his son many days.

35. And all his sons and all his daughters rose³ up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

¹ Chap. 44: 28. ² 2 Kings 19: 1. Esth. 4: 1. Isa. 32: 11. ³ 2 Sam. 12: 17.

coat of many colors, which here turns itself even against the father. Doubtless in some degree they thought themselves justified in the thought that their father had given them cause of irritation of providing such a coat for Joseph. Reuben and Judah are, moreover, burdened by the ban of silence. — *Lange*.

34. Rent his cloths. The common signs of Oriental mourning. A rent is made in the skirt, more or less long according to the afflicted feelings of the mourner, and a coarse, rough piece of black sackcloth or camel's-hair cloth is wound round the waist. — *J. F. and B.*

35. Rose up to comfort him. This announcement is startling after the deed which they have done. But there is no limit to human hypocrisy. — *Alford*. All his daughters. From this there arises the probability that Jacob had other daughters than Dinah, though the daughters-in-law may be so called. — *Lange*. Into the grave. Not the earth, for Joseph was supposed to be torn in pieces, but the unknown place, — the place of departed souls, where Jacob expected at death to meet his beloved son. — *J. F. and B.*

36. Midianites. See on ver. 25. Sold him into Egypt. By the route which lay to the west of Hebron, through Gaza, he was brought down to Egypt; and at Heliopolis or On, at the head of the Delta, which was then the seat of government, offered for sale, perhaps publicly in the market. — *T. Smith*. The traffic in slaves was tolerated by the Egyptians; and it is reasonable to suppose that many persons were engaged, as at present, in bringing them to Egypt for public sale, independent of those who were sent as part of the tribute, and who were probably at first the property of the monarch. — *Ancient Egyptians: Wilkinson*. Potiphar . . . captain of the guard. More literally, captain of the executioners, or chief of the slaughtermen, because all penal inflictions from the king were executed by the soldiers of the royal guard. — The military caste in Egypt ranked next to the priesthood; and the entire force consisted of 410,000 men, who were divided into two corps, a thousand serving each for a year as the king's body-guard. (Herod. ii. 164-168.) Potiphar was probably the captain of one of these thousands, and, consequently, a man of great honor and influence. "In the paintings of marches and battles, these royal guards are commonly seen to be employed in protecting the person of the king, and are distinguished by a peculiar dress and weapons." They received, in addition to the regular income of the soldier, a separate salary, which, in the case of the captain, would no doubt be considerable. — *T. Smith*.

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Thornley Smith's *Joseph and His Times*. On Joseph in Egypt, see Osburn's *Monumental Egypt*, vol. ii. pp. 85-104; Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians* (1879), vol. i. p. 286, on money; and vol. ii. p. 168, on coat of colors; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; *Bible Plants*, on Spicery, &c. *Hasselquist's Travels*, p. 293; on Egyptology of the Bible, see Schaff's *Through Bible Lands*, pp. 82-103; on the "pit" or dry cistern, see *Land and Book*, vol. i. p. 442.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Coat of many colors. — For beautiful or favorite children precisely the same thing is done at this day. Crimson and purple and other colors are often tastefully sewed together. Sometimes children of the Mohammedans have their jackets embroidered with

gold and silk of various colors. A child clothed in a garment of many colors, it is believed that neither tongues nor evil spirits will injure, because the attention is taken from the beauty of the person to that of the garment. — *Robert's Oriental Illustrations*.

II. Envy. — I remember a Grecian story of a man who killed himself through envy. His fellow-citizens had reared a statue to one of their number who was a celebrated victor in the public games. So strong was the envy of one of the hero's rivals, that he went forth in the night to destroy that monument. At length he moved it from its pedestal, but in its fall it crushed him. A symbolic act, showing the suicidal action of envy on the soul. — *Dr. Thomas*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Ver. 2. The evil hate those who interfere with their evil ways. Nevertheless all the good ought to interfere.
2. Ver. 3. It is a wrong and a misfortune for parents to show partiality to any of their children.
3. Ver. 5. God beforehand prepares those who have to endure adversity.
4. Be careful of the child of to-day, for to-morrow he may be governor.
5. Ver. 23. Envy is a mean sin, and leads to the worst of crimes.
6. People seem to escape the effects of their sins, but their future punishment is sure to come.
7. Ver. 31. Almost all sins require lying to hide them.
8. Ver. 36. God's hand rules over the acts of men.
9. The Bible is confirmed by the monuments of the past.

LESSON VI. — NOVEMBER 7, 1880.

JOSEPH IN PRISON. — GEN. 39: 21-23; 40: 1-8.

TIME. — 11 years, B. C. 1729-1718. It is uncertain how much of this time was spent as servant of Potiphar, and how much in prison. Most make his stay with Potiphar about ten years, and his whole prison life three years, of which he had two more years after this. Joseph was now about 28 years old.

PLACE. — Heliopolis (On), 20 miles north of Memphis in Egypt, near the head of the Delta of the Nile, and the capital of Lower Egypt. "The scene of the bondage, the imprisonment, and the subsequent exaltation and marriage, of Joseph, was the city of Heliopolis, which occupied so commanding a position in the annals of Egypt. Heliopolis was the most ancient capital of Egypt." — *Osburn's Monumental Egypt*.

RULERS. — Aphophis, the last king of the 15th dynasty, king of Egypt. The Chaldean empire was founded 550 years before this. Sin Shada, of the fourth dynasty, was probably king. — *Rawlinson*.

EGYPT. — Egypt stood, at this time, the most flourishing kingdom the world had ever known. It was cultured in the arts, — in learning, in architecture, printing, writing, weaving, &c. The chief cities were Heliopolis, Memphis, and Thebes, the capitals of different districts.

JOSEPH IN EGYPTIAN SLAVERY. — We have but little knowledge of the ancient condition of slaves in Egypt. Those who were captives of war seem, indeed, to have been badly treated; and, like the Israelites eventually, had hard task-work imposed upon them, under the superintendence of men who plied the stick freely when not satisfied. But the case of domestic slaves, bought with money, seems to have been very different, and in most respects similar to that of the same class at the present day in the same country. Some facts, therefore, in illustration of their present condition, may be suitably introduced here, as tending to throw some light on the position which Joseph occupied. There are few families in Egypt that do not possess one or two slaves. In that country, as well as in Arabia, it is rarely that a slave remains in a respectable family for a number of years without being made free. Male slaves are, for the most part, treated like children of the family, and always better than free servants. Female slaves are not so well off, as they suffer from the jealousy of their mistresses. If a slave behaves ill, he is degraded from domestic service, and sent into the country to labor in his master's fields. A slave brought up in the house thinks himself superior to every other person in it, except the master. He is admitted to all the family councils; he is allowed to trade, or to engage in any business

21. ¶ But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor¹ in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

¹ Exod. 12: 36. Ps. 106: 46. Prov. 16: 7. Dan. 1: 9.

on his own account; and he may, in fact, do just as he pleases, provided he proves himself a bold fellow, who may be relied upon as ready and able, in case of emergency, to wield a sword in defence of his master. — *Kitto*.

JOSEPH'S OPPORTUNITIES. — The young Hebrew slave was, we imagine, thoughtful and observant, and extremely diligent in the culture of his mind. Learning and the arts were at that time in high repute in Egypt; and, as the monuments prove, writing, painting, and architecture were practised and cultivated to a very great extent. And did Joseph remain wholly ignorant of these arts? We cannot think so. With that of writing, especially, his duties might require him to become familiar, and it is not improbable that he would pay some attention to others also. — *Thoruley Smith*.

JOSEPH IN PRISON. — The prison into which Joseph was cast, and which was undoubtedly within the premises of his master, is called by a term which signifies the "house of roundness, or the round-house," from the originally round form of the prison. In the present case, the term very probably implies an edifice, or portion of the official mansion, mostly subterranean, of which the roof, or vault, rising immediately from the surface of the ground, was round, or shaped like an inverted bowl. That it was of this nature, may be inferred from its being called, in chap. 41: 15, "the dungeon." Such dungeons are still, under similar circumstances, used in the East; and they have usually an aperture at the top, by which some light and air are admitted, and through which the prisoners were let down. These, or any other place of detention, are always upon the premises of the chief of the guard, or of the magistrate. — *Kitto*. The Samaritan Pentateuch, instead of the words which we have rendered "the round-house," has "the house of employment;" and it has been observed that in Egypt criminals and captives were always employed in public works. It is probable, then, that the prisoners over whom Joseph was placed were kept constantly at work in manual labor, and that to him was committed the comparatively easy task of being their overseer, or director. — *T. Smith*.

CONNECTION.

In Egypt the second period of Joseph's life begins. As a child he had been a true son, and withstood the evil example of his brethren. He is now to serve a strange master in the hard state of slavery, and his virtue will be put to a severer proof than it had yet sustained. Joseph prospered in the house of the Egyptian, who, seeing that God blessed him, and pleased with his good service, "set him over his house, and all he had he gave into his hand." The sculptures and paintings of the ancient Egyptian tombs bring vividly before us the daily life and duties of Joseph. The property of great men is shown to have been managed by scribes, who exercised a most methodical and minute supervision over all the operations of agriculture, gardening, the keeping of live stock, and fishing. Every product was carefully registered to check the dishonesty of the laborers, who in Egypt have always been famous in this respect. His master's wife, with the well-known profligacy of the Egyptian women, tempted him, and, failing, charged him with the crime she would have made him commit. Potiphar, incensed against Joseph, cast him into prison. Here the hardest time of Joseph's period of probation began. He was cast into prison on a false accusation, to remain there for at least two years, and perhaps for a much longer time. — *Samuel Wolcott, D.D.* Among the Egyptians, no one could take away even the life of a slave without authority from the king. Potiphar, therefore, was not at liberty to put Joseph to death. But the treatment to which he subjected him was sufficiently severe, for at first "his feet were hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons" (Ps. 105: 18); and, if the traditions of the Rabbins may be depended on, he was frequently brought out of prison, and tortured, for the amusement of Potiphar's wife, who is supposed by some to have been the Zuleikha of Eastern tradition. — *T. Smith*.

EXPLANATORY.

21. The Lord was with Joseph. He had been with him in the house of Potiphar, and when thrust into the prison he was with him still. To Joseph imprisonment, even in its mildest form, would be a trial of the severest kind, as it ever is, observes Hengstenberg, even to spiritual heroes, such as a Savonarola and a St. Cyran. From the times of Joseph, even unto this day, prisons have often been the abodes of some of the favorites of heaven.

to - you brought it to pass - in my work and out through human agency - his own purposes with respect to Joseph - and all the great events that hung on Joseph's fortune - God was in time all of guiding controlling overruling at each step in the strange drama -

NOVEMBER 7

LESSON VI.

GEN. 39: 21-33; 40: 1-8.

22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

40: 1. And it came to pass after these things, that the butler¹ of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2. And Pharaoh was wroth² against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into

¹ Neh. 1: 11. ² Prov. 16: 14; 19: 19.

God's presence has made the dungeon light, and some of the happiest moments they have ever known have been experienced in those gloomy and desolate abodes. — *T. Smith*. In the account of Joseph's imprisonment is given to us an explanation of one of the mysteries of this our human life. It is a mystery that often sinfulness and selfishness reap the prizes here, while goodness and integrity have to endure the ills of this life. It is as if we thought that the Everlasting rewarded the goodness of his servants as a foolish mother giving her child that which is pleasant to the taste. We do well, and suffer for it; and then we complain that we have not our reward in material prosperity. Shortly after his imprisonment, Joseph was released, his merit acknowledged, and almost regal dignity conferred upon him. Whereupon we say, "Now all is right, merit has its reward;" and with this poetical justice we are satisfied. But this is not the justice of God's world. Are these, then, the rewards of well-doing, — horses and carriages, the royal robe, and the knee bowed before him? Is it with these things, quite earthly, that the Everlasting rewards celestial qualities? Neither in this world nor in the world to come are these the rewards of goodness. What was Joseph's reward? Not the rank conferred upon him; but this — to be pure, to be haunted by no principle of remorse; to see God, to have the vision of the King in his beauty, to know and to feel that he is near. Think you that from this the dungeon could take much, and that to this his earthly honors could add anything? The reward of well-doing is God. — *Robertson*. Gave him favor in the sight of the keeper. It is highly probable, from the situation of this prison (chap. 40: 3), that the keeper might have been previously acquainted with Joseph, and have had access to know his innocence of the crime laid to his charge, as well as with all the high integrity of his character. That may partly account for his showing so much kindness and confidence to his prisoner. But there was a higher influence at work; for "the Lord was with Joseph." — *J. F. and B.*

22. Committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners. We observe here the real nature of human influence, — not the influence of rank, but of character. Make all men equal in rank to-day, and to-morrow there will be found those who have acquired influence over the others. These prisoners were all in the same position, but very soon Joseph's character gained him influence. — *Robertson*. He was the doer of it; i.e., it was done by his direction and authority. (See Introduction, Joseph in Prison.)

Chap. 40: 1. After these things; i.e., what has been narrated in chap. 39. The butler. Not only the cupbearer, but overseer of the royal vineyards, as well as the wine-



COOKING GOOSE OVER A FIRE, AND CUTTING UP MEAT. (Wilkinson.)

cellars; having, probably, some hundreds of people under him. Baker, or cook. He had the superintendence of every thing relating to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table. Both officers, especially the former, were, in ancient Egypt, always persons of great rank and importance; and, from the confidential nature of their employment, as well as their access to the royal presence, they were generally the highest nobles or princes of the blood. — *J. F. and B.* Had offended their lord. With what crimes they were charged, the sacred narrative does not inform us; but it is probable that they were suspected of having had designs upon the king's life. — *T. Smith*.

He was the doer of it.

6 - that command of our sovereign in his subject?
 Luke 10: 38-37 - Rom-12: 15 - How man
 Secure the same ordering of our steps for good Pro- & C.

GEN. 39: 21-23; 40: 1-8. LESSON VI.

FOURTH QUARTER.

the prison, the place¹ where Joseph was bound.

4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5. ¶ And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in² one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream,

the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.³

7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly⁴ to-day?

¹ Chap. 39: 20, 23. ² Job 33: 15-17. ³ Dan. 4: 5. ⁴ Neh. 2: 2.

2. **Pharaoh.** Pharaoh means "the great house," and is used in the Scriptures and on the monuments as a generic name for king; as we use "Czar" for the Emperor of Russia, and the "Sublime Porte" for the government of the Sultan. — *Schaff.*

3. **He put them in ward.** Whatever was their crime, they were committed — until their case could be investigated — to the ward or custody of the captain of the guard, i.e., Potiphar, in an outer part of whose house the royal prison was situated. — *J. F. and B. House.* The quarters of the life-guard. — *Conant.*

4. **Charged Joseph with them.** The captain of the guard, not the keeper, though he was most favorably disposed; but Potiphar himself (or his successor, as Smith suggests) gave Joseph charge over them, being, it would seem, by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebrew, though probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement. — *J. F. and B.* Note the hand of Providence in this. **Charged Joseph** (39: 21-23). Had they been committed to another prison, or had Joseph's character been different, this had not fallen out (Pr. 16: 7). **He served,** as a prisoner of inferior rank. — *Class and Desk.* He served or ministered unto them by supplying them with food and other necessities. — *Bush.* In accordance with Oriental usage they were treated with the consideration due their rank, while the issue of their arrest was pending. — *Conant.* **A season in ward.** Lit., days: how long, is uncertain. The manner in which the divine Providence quietly and secretly makes the most insignificant things, apparently, the occasion and the cause of wonderful changes, appears very visible in our narrative. It would appear simply fortuitous that Pharaoh should have thrown into prison his two officers, on account, perhaps, of some very trifling offence; still more accidental, that Joseph should have charge of them; that both should have had alarming dreams. But all this apparent chance was made a prerequisite, in the course of God's providence, for Joseph's exaltation and Israel's redemption. — *Lang.*

5. **They dreamed a dream.** The two officers of Pharaoh had been for some time in prison, when each of them had a dream during one night. Through the East generally, dreams were anciently regarded as of supernatural origin, and the interpretation of them sought with anxious care. That, prior to the gospel dispensation, God should often have revealed his will to men by such phenomena, cannot be surprising. — *T. Smith.* **According to the interpretation.** That is, answering to the event. The expression implies that the dreams were not vain, empty, and unmeaning, as dreams usually are, but each of them highly significant, and capable of a sound interpretation, which Joseph gave. — *Bush.*

6. **Behold, they were sad.** Supernatural dreams seem usually to have left an impression upon the minds of their recipients amounting to a violent agitation. Thus (Dan. 2: 1), "Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." So also the dream of Pilate's wife (Matt. 27: 19). — *Bush.*

7. **In the ward.** Custody, guardianship. **Wherefore look ye so sadly?** We see the tenderness of Joseph's sympathy. He observed the shade on the countenance of his fellow-prisoners, and immediately asked why they were sad. This tenderness of feeling was gained only by suffering. Joseph had suffered like them, and therefore he understood their feelings. We do not often remember that suffering is absolutely necessary to capacitate us for sympathy. — *Robertson.*

8. **There is no interpreter of it.** An expression showing that the interpretation of dreams was much in vogue, and that it was one of the wants of persons of rank to have their dreams interpreted. Do not interpretations belong to God? Joseph piously reminded them of this, as opposed to the pretensions of astrologers and the like. The

Secure than to have
 our own hand.

7-~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~discipline~~ ~~had~~ ~~made~~ ~~him~~ ~~patient~~
and tender and gentle - he could speak
to their hearts now - *Mark to him for*
winnow - Gen 40: 12-13

NOVEMBER 7.

LESSON VI. GEN. 39: 21-23; 40: 1-8.

8. And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter¹ of it. And Joseph said unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God?² tell me *them*, I pray you.

¹ Chap. 41: 15. ² Dan. 2: 21, 28.

butler first relates his dream, of the vine with three branches, growing grapes that he pressed into Pharaoh's cup (40: 9-11). The dream was thus interpreted: "The three branches," said Joseph, "are three days. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head (or reckon with thee), and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler" (vers. 12, 13). The simplicity of this interpretation is at once apparent, and the chief butler saw immediately its truth. — *T. Smith*. The baker, encouraged by the interpretation of the butler's dream, tells his dream. "I also," said he, "was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head; and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head" (vers. 16, 17). To this Joseph gives an unfavorable interpretation. The interpretations are correct; and in three days, on the king's birthday, the butler is released, and the baker hung. But the man so befriended by Joseph, and appealed to for remembrance, failed to remember him. — *P*. Thus the poor Hebrew prisoner is left to his simple faith in God for the realization of his own dreams, when it seems now farther off than ever. Meanwhile God is so ordering events as to make Joseph's deliverance due more directly to himself than to any human agency. Joseph is encouraged by the gift of interpreting the dreams to rely on God as his counsellor and friend, who, in his own good time and way, will release him also from the prison. — *Jacobus*.

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ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The famous obelisk called "Cleopatra's Needle," and now just carried to London and re-erected there, was first erected 1,500 years before Christ, at On (Heliopolis) where Joseph was in prison.

II. The monuments show that the art of baking was carried by the Egyptians to a very high state of perfection. In the tomb of Rameses IV., at Biban el Moluk, kitchen scenes are represented, after describing which Rosellini says, "From all these representations it is clear that the Egyptians were accustomed to prepare many kinds of pastry for the table, as we see the very same kinds spread out upon the tables which are represented in the tombs. They made even bread in many and various forms. These articles are found, kneaded from barley or wheat, in the form of a star, a triangle, a disk, and other like things." On the same subject Wilkinson observes, "Some sifted and mixed the flour; others kneaded the paste with their hands, and formed it into rolls, which were then prepared for baking, and, being placed on a tray or board, were carried, *on a man's head*, to the oven." Baskets of wicker-work, too, are frequently represented on the monuments; and the custom of carrying on the head is referred to by Herodotus (ii. 35), and was quite a characteristic of Egyptian manners. — *Thornley Smith*.

III. Life is like a stream flowing sometimes in darkness, and sometimes in sunshine, sometimes over rocks and precipices, and at others through green fields and lovely vales. But if it fails in the darkness it cannot see the light. Only by faithfulness in its hard times can it grow broader and deeper and more restful as it flows on, and at length feel the tide-waves of the great ocean to which it is going. — *P*.

IV. As I stood before one of those wonderful Aubusson tapestries, I asked the attendant to show me the other side. It was a confused mass of threads and thrums and ends, without order or meaning or beauty. And yet, he said, the artist stands on this reverse side while he is making the picture. He sees his pattern, he knows what threads to weave in, but he does not see the picture he is forming. So Joseph was now weaving his life on the reverse side. He could not see its meaning. He saw the confused jumble of life's threads. He worked in the threads God bade him; he followed the pattern set him; and at length God showed him the right side, the true picture his life was making, full of blessing and glory. — *P*.

PRACTICAL.

1. The righteous often must pass through scenes of trial, which are not sent to the wicked, in order to prepare them for a better and more glorious life. The Valleys of Humiliation lead to the Mounts of Transfiguration.
2. The righteous are as faithful in a prison as in a palace; in lowly as in exalted circumstances.
3. The lowest and most humble service is noble and exalted when done for God.
4. It is faithfulness in little things, in lowly circumstances, that fits men for larger spheres.
5. God's best rewards are not outward prosperity, but his presence and blessing.
6. God leads us in strange ways, but they are always the best ways.
7. Character tells everywhere, in all circumstances.
8. God often blesses others for the sake of his faithful children.
9. God sometimes sends to men foregleams of glory, and forebodings of the evil to come.
10. It is mean to forget, in our prosperity, the friends of our adversity. —

LESSON VII. — NOVEMBER 14, 1880.

JOSEPH THE WISE RULER. — GEN. 41: 41-57.

TIME. — Joseph was released from prison, and promoted to the second place in the kingdom, B. C. 1716, when he was 30 years old, and 13 years after he was sold into Egypt (the last lesson).

PLACE. — Heliopolis (also called On), the capital city of Lower Egypt, near the head of the Delta of the Nile.

RULER. — Aphophis the last of the shepherd kings of the 15th dynasty.

CONNECTION.

Joseph remained in prison two years longer, forgotten by the released cup-bearer, when Pharaoh was disturbed by dreams which none of the scribes or wise men of Egypt could interpret. Then the chief cup-bearer remembered his fault, and told Pharaoh of Joseph, who was brought out of prison, and set before the king. After bearing witness to the true God, as in the former case, by ascribing all the power of interpretation to Him who had sent the dreams, he explained to Pharaoh their significance, which to an Egyptian was

most striking. The dream had been twofold, to mark its certain and speedy fulfilment (ver. 32). Seven years of an abundance extraordinary even for fruitful Egypt were to be followed by seven years of still more extraordinary dearth. In the first dream, the seven years of plenty were denoted by seven heifers, the sacred symbols of Isis, the goddess of production, which came up out of the river, the great fertilizer of Egypt, whose very soil is well called by Herodotus "the gift of the Nile." These were beautiful and fat, as they fed on the luxuriant marsh-grass by the river's bank; but after them came up seven others, so ill-looking and lean that Pharaoh had never seen the like for badness, which devoured the seven fat kine, and remained as lean as they were before. The second dream was still plainer. There sprang up a stalk of that branching Egyptian wheat which now grows in our own fields from seed found in mummy-cases. That seen by Pharaoh had the unusual number of

seven ears, full and good, denoting the seven years of plenty. Then there sprang up another stalk, also bearing seven ears, thin and blasted with the east wind, and so mildewed that they infected and consumed the seven good ears. Joseph went farther, and counselled Pharaoh to give some discreet person authority over all the land, that he might store up the surplus corn of the seven years of plenty against the seven years of famine. Pharaoh saw



EGYPTIAN WHEAT.

Lesson VII. Continued in the 41st & 42nd verses. 6.
Nov-Exodus 32 10-12

that none could be so fit for this office as Joseph himself, "in whom was the Spirit of God." He made him his vicegerent over Egypt, and gave him his own signet, the indisputable mark of royal power. — *William Smith.*

41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee¹ over all the land of Egypt.

42. And Pharaoh took off his ring²

from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain³ about his neck ;

¹ Dan. 6 : 3. ² Esth. 3 : 10 ; 8 : 2, 8, 15. ³ Dan. 5 : 7, 29.

EXPLANATORY.

41. **Pharaoh.** A general name for the king of Egypt. Aphophis was probably then the Pharaoh of Egypt. (See Lesson VI.) I have set thee over all the land. When we consider that Joseph was a prisoner and a slave when he came into the presence of the king, and that he departed from that presence the second man in the kingdom, the transition is so vast, that with us it appears too greatly at variance with probability to be tolerated, even in a romance. In the East, however, this is all different; and an advancement so great and so abrupt is still, although not common, of sufficiently frequent occurrence, that instances more or less analogous would, in the reading of this history, occur to every Eastern mind. Joseph's high and sudden promotion arose not merely from the conviction of his wisdom, and of the singular political sagacity and administrative judgment which his counsel indicated, but from the conviction that he enjoyed the special favor of God, and was therefore likely to prosper in whatever he undertook. *What* God thus favored him, none were probably very solicitous to inquire. It was enough that it was the powerful God who was able to afford his servant the interpretations which the most renowned of the wise men of Egypt had been unable to produce. "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art," was a great thing for the king to say to a foreigner; for Egypt was so famous of old time for its knowledge and learning, that the wisest in other lands thought it not beneath them to repair thither in search of wisdom. — *Kitto.*

42. **Pharaoh took off his ring.** This was, no doubt, a principal circumstance in Joseph's investiture in the high office of chief minister to the king of Egypt. The ring was undoubtedly a signet, or seal-ring, which gave validity to the documents to which it was affixed, and by the delivery of which, therefore, Pharaoh delegated to Joseph the chief authority in the State. In the East, the seal *alone* has the effect which we give to *both* the seal and the signature. People in the East do not sign their names. They have seals in which their names and titles are engraven, and with which they make an impression with thick ink on all occasions for which we use the signature. To give a man your seal, is therefore to give him the use of that authority and power which your own signature possesses. — *Pictorial Bible.* **Vestures of fine linen.** Joseph was next "arrayed in vestures of fine linen," which was not only a high distinction, as coming from the king,—thereby constituting it a dress of honor, still conferred as a mark of high favor by the sovereigns of the East,—but denoted the rank and station to which he was exalted, as it appears that dresses of this fine fabric were only allowed to be worn by persons of the highest rank and distinction in Egypt. — *Kitto.* The quality of the fine linen fully justifies all the praises of antiquity, and excites equal admiration at the present day, being to the touch comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to our finest cambric. — *Sir J. G. Wilkinson.* According to Herodotus, the use of linen garments in Egypt was confined to the priests. The dress of persons of rank in Egypt consisted of a kind of apron, or kilt, sometimes simply bound round the loins and lapping over in front, but generally secured by a girdle, or by a sort of sash, tied in front in a bow or knot. It was sometimes folded over, with a centre-piece falling down in front, beneath the part where it overlapped. Over this was worn a loose upper robe of the "fine linen," with full sleeves, secured by a girdle around the loins. Or else the dress consisted of the mere apron, and a shirt with short close sleeves, over which was thrown a loose robe, leaving the right arm exposed. The dress of the king himself seems to have differed only in the apron and head-dress, which were of peculiar form, and belonged exclusively to his rank as king. — *Wilkinson.* **Put a gold chain about his neck.** This was a badge of office worn in Egypt by the judge and the prime minister. It had a similar use in Persia and Babylonia (Dan. 5 : 7). — *Murphy.* In the tombs at Beni-Hassan many slaves are represented, each of whom has in his hand something that belongs to the dress or ornaments of his master. The first carries one of the necklaces with which

43. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land¹ of Egypt.

44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave

him to wife Asenath the Poti-pherah priest² of On. sesh went out over all the Egypt.

46. ¶ And Joseph was old when he stood before the king of Egypt: and Joseph went from the presence of Pharaoh throughout all the Egypt.

47. And in the seven

¹ Chap. 45: 8, 26. Acts 7: 10. ² Exod. 2: 16. ² Sam. 8: 18. ³ 1 Sam. 16: 21. Dan. 1: 19.

the neck and breast of persons of high rank are generally adorned. Over it st: lace of gold."—*Hengstenberg*.

43. Made him to ride in the second chariot. Thus arrayed, Joseph is placed in Pharaoh's second chariot (next to Pharaoh's), and in the midst of a splendid procession conducted through the city of Heliopolis. The spectacle was, no doubt, very magnificent. Chariots drawn by horses are frequently represented on the monuments, and appear to have been made of wood, and constructed to carry two persons,—the rider and his charioteer. On great occasions the horses were decorated with rich trappings of gold, pendent tassels, and feathers, their headdress especially being most imposing. That music attended this procession, is highly probable. The Egyptian band consisted of the harp, the single and double pipe, the flute, guitar, and tambourine.—*T. Smith*. Bow the knee. The heralds that went before him cried, Abreck! The word *Abreck*, rendered "bow the knee," is of entirely obscure origin. It is not known whether it is Hebrew or Egyptian. On the whole, the rendering of the authorized version is that most approved, though by no means certain.—*Alford*. This word *Abreck*, according to the best authorities, signifies *pure prince*. It was intended, then, to signify that Joseph was now recognized as a native Egyptian,—that he was no longer a foreigner, but as one born in the land.—*T. Smith*.

44. I am Pharaoh. My will is law, and no one in my kingdom shall do aught without permission from thee.—*Thomas J. Conant*.

45. Zaphnath-paaneah. It was not unusual in ancient times to give new names to persons on particular occasions.—*Bush*. Zaphnath (*seph-nath*) is *he who receiveth Neith*, i.e., the inventrix of the art of weaving, and the goddess of wisdom. Paaneah. This name actually occurs in a tomb at Sacchara, as the name of one of the princes of Usercheres, about 150 years before Joseph's time, *pah-noech*. Its import also corresponds exactly with the occasion on which it was given. It means, *he who flies from* (avoids) *pollution*, especially adultery. So that the first name conferred by Pharaoh upon Joseph commemorated the divine wisdom to which he owed his exaltation, and the second his innocence of the crime for which he had so long suffered imprisonment.—*Osburn, in Israel in Egypt*. Asenath. Either "devoted to Neith," the Egyptian Minerva, or compounded of the two names Isis and Neith. Poti-pherah; i.e., "belonging" or "devoted to Rah," i.e., the sun, a most appropriate designation for a priest of On or Heliopolis, the great seat of the sun-worship.—*Browne*. According to Heeren, there was connected with each temple in Egypt a high priest, called a Piromis (a word signifying "a noble and good man"); and from Herodotus we learn that the college of priests at Heliopolis, or On, was the most eminent in Egypt.—*T. Smith*. The priests were the highest and most privileged class in Egypt. Intermarriage with this caste at once determined the social position of the wondrous foreigner.—*Murphy*. The king was always either of this or of the military class; and, if of the latter, it was necessary that he should be initiated in the former.—*Conant*. On. Heliopolis is the Greek name for the Egyptian êi-n-re (i.e., "the abode of the sun"), from which was derived the Hebrew On or Aon, translated Bethshemesh (i.e., the house of the sun, Jer. 43: 13). It was the Rome and Oxford of ancient Egypt, the capital of its hierarchy and its university, the centre of its religion and learning. Every Pharaoh brought his rich offerings to this place, and bore the proud title "Lord of Heliopolis." Here was the sanctuary of the worship of Rah or the sun, and of the sacred bull Mnevis.—*Schaff*.

46. Stood before Pharaoh. As his servant and minister of state.—*Conant*. Went throughout all the land. Made an immediate survey to determine the site and size of the storehouses required for the different quarters of the country.—*J. F. and B.*

How many times have I heard the word "blessed" as a type of both peace and the church. Rev 8: 21. a better name Rev. 3: 12 -

NOVEMBER 14.

LESSON VII.

GEN. 41: 41-57.

years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea,¹ very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

50. And unto Joseph were born two sons² before the years of famine came: which Asenath the daughter

of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful³ in the land of my affliction.

53. ¶ And the seven years of plentifulness that was in the land of Egypt were ended.

54. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph

¹ Chap. 22: 17. ² Sam. 13: 5. Judg. 7: 12. Ps. 78: 27. ³ Chap. 46: 20; 48: 5. ⁴ Chap. 49: 22.

47. The earth brought forth by handfuls. That is, in vast abundance; one kernel yielding a whole handful, or each stalk producing as much corn as, popularly speaking, the hand could grasp. This, or even more than this productiveness, is not at this day unusual in Egypt.—*Bush*. There was not a place in the then known world so well adapted to the production of corn (grain) as Egypt. It cannot be doubted that the threefold yearly harvest, which she yields even in her present degradation, was also gathered in the eighteenth dynasty.—*Osburn*. This plenty was occasioned by the annual rising of the waters of the Nile, to an unusual height. The waters deposit on the land a rich loam which they bring down with them from the mountains above. It is this deposit which may be considered as constituting the wealth of Egypt. This will serve to explain the cause of that plenty which prevailed in Egypt during the seven years. The rains in Abyssinia were abundant, the Nile rose to an unwonted height, the deposits of the water were perhaps unusually rich (and spread over an unusually large area), and the people sowed large quantities of grain, and reaped very abundant harvests.—*T. Smith*. (See Illustrative, I.)

48. And he gathered up all the food. During the seven years of plenty Joseph gathered up all the surplus food of the land, and placed it in granaries prepared for its reception. By what means the government obtained possession of the corn, we are not informed. It is probable, however, that a tax of one-tenth of the produce of the land was ordinarily paid by the Egyptians to the crown, and that now this tax was simply doubled; yet some are of opinion that the surplus corn was *bought up* by Joseph, which might be done, in a time of such abundance, at a comparatively small cost.—*T. Smith*. The food of the field . . . about every city, &c. To save labor both in gathering and distributing.

50, 51. Unto Joseph were born two sons . . . Manasseh. The first son he called MANASSEH, which means *forgetting*—or *forgetfulness*. And why? "For God, said he, hath made me to forget all my toil, and all my father's house." It does not mean that these things were obliterated from his mind—for the very act is one of remembrance. But he did not allow the memory of it to embitter his present advantages. He cherished no resentful remembrances against those who had been the instruments of his affliction. The memory of his troubles was comparatively lost in the happiness that had now succeeded.—*Kitto*.

52. The name of the second . . . Ephraim. Which means *fruitfulness*. "For God hath made me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction," in that very land in which he had endured so much trouble and disgrace. No man had ever more occasion than Joseph to know the fruitfulness of affliction. God cuts even to the quick the branches of the vine that he wills to bear much fruit. We may search history, we may explore the knowledge and experience of our own lives, in vain, for any instance of much fruit for God or for man having been yielded by unafflicted men.—*Kitto*. For God hath caused, &c. It is a beautiful and interesting circumstance in the history of Joseph, that he has God ever before his eyes.—*Smith*.

54. The seven years of dearth began to come. To this portion of the narrative it has been objected, that as the Nile never fails to flow altogether, and that as the Delta is not entirely dependent upon it for moisture, Egypt cannot be subject to famine, except to a

had said :¹ and the dearth was in all lands ; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55. And when all the land of Egypt was famished,² the people cried to Pharaoh for bread : and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph ; what he saith to you, do.

56. And the famine was over all the

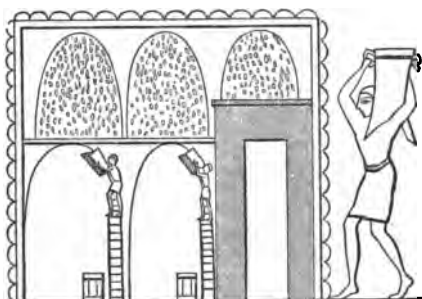
face of the earth : and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold³ unto the Egyptians ; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn ; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

¹ Ver. 30. ² Jer. 14 : 1, 2. Lam. 4 : 4. ³ Chap. 42 : 6 ; 47 : 14, 24.

very limited extent. But such a statement betrays the ignorance of the parties who make it ; for, that famine has frequently occurred in Egypt, is notoriously a matter of history. As the plenty during Joseph's administration was occasioned by extensive and unusual overflows of the river, so the dearth was occasioned partly by the failure of the overflow, and partly by the prevalence of the south-east wind. The rise of the water much below the usual mark would prevent the sowing of a sufficient quantity of grain, and the prevalence of the south-east wind would tend to destroy even that which was sown, after it came up. — *T. Smith.* (See Illustrative, II.) In all lands. The neighboring countries, Canaan, and probably parts of Syria, Arabia, and Africa.

56. Over all the face of the earth (or land). Equivalent to the expression above, "in all lands," meaning all the countries adjacent. Joseph opened all the storehouses. The granaries are frequently represented on the monuments. They appear to have been public buildings, usually of vast extent, and divided into vaults, some of which had arched roofs. Sold unto the Egyptians. Whilst, however, he provided for the necessities of the people, he was careful to promote the interests of the monarchy. The money which he obtained for the corn he brought into Pharaoh's house (chap. 47 : 14), thus enriching the king's exchequer to a very considerable extent. But money soon failed, and in the second or third year of the famine, the Egyptians came to Joseph for food, saying, "Give us bread" (chap. 47 : 15). To this demand Joseph replied by offering them bread in lieu of their cattle ; and "they brought their cattle unto Joseph." But the cattle, too, failed. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh ; for the



EGYPTIAN GRANARY, SHOWING HOW THE GRAIN WAS PUT IN. (Wilkinson.)

Egyptians sold every man his field. But it may be asked, Would it not have been more generous to have *given* them food, and allow them to retain their flocks and herds ? We are not obliged to uphold the policy of Joseph in every particular, yet, that provision was made for the most indigent, we cannot doubt. But these transactions originated in the proposals of the people themselves, and Joseph only agreed to their own terms. To have supplied the people with corn when their cattle were disposed of, without an equivalent, would have been injurious both to themselves and to the interests of the state. To *give* food to a people tends to destroy their independence of mind, and to foster habits of indolence. The state would have thus lost the opportunity now offered to it of gaining a more decided influence over the country, and of breaking up the petty influence of the nobles, which up to this time had probably been one of the causes of its weakness. The country was divided into many districts or provinces, in consequence of which the supreme power was comparatively feeble. He did not reduce them to a state of slavery, or take away their lands from them. On the contrary, he gave them corn on the condition that henceforth they should till the land as tenants of the crown, paying to Pharaoh one-fifth of the produce (chap. 47 : 23, 24). All this was done for the general good (to make them one strong nation), to which each particular person in his turn was obliged to contribute. — *T. Smith.*

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Osburn's *Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 135, &c., for cause of the years of plenty and famine, and pp. 372, 373, on Joseph's policy and the abundance of corn; Rawlinson's *Historical Illustrations*, for general agreement of Scripture with the secular history and monuments in the time of Joseph; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Thornley Smith's *Joseph* (1879); Wardlaw's *History of Joseph* (1851); Plumptre's *History of Joseph* (1848); Stanley's *Jewish Church*; Wilkinson's *Egypt*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Cause of the years of plenty and famine. — Osburn, in his *Monumental History of Egypt*, thinks that the cause of the seven years of plenty was the bursting of the barriers (and gradually wearing them away) of "the great Lake of Ethiopia," which once existed on the Upper Nile, thus bringing more water and more sediment to Lower Egypt for these years. And he shows how this same destruction of this immense sea would cause the absorption of the waters of the Nile over its dry bed for several years after, thus causing the famine.

II. Famines in Egypt. — The most remarkable famine was that of the reign of the Fátíme Kaleefeh, El-Mustansir-billáh, which is the only instance on record of one of seven years duration in Egypt since the time of Joseph (A. D. 1064-1071). This famine exceeded in severity all others of modern times. Vehement drought and pestilence, says a contemporary writer, continued for seven consecutive years. — *W. Smith*. This famine was so severe that dogs and cats, and even human flesh, were eaten. All the horses of the caliph but three perished, and his family had to fly into Syria. Another famine scarcely less severe took place in Egypt in A. D. 1199. — *Rawlinson's Historical Illustrations*.

PRACTICAL.

1. If God has a work he wants done, he will raise up means and men to do it.
2. God's plans do not fail, though he may be long carrying them out.
3. The afflictions and trials of the righteous end in large and glorious blessings.
4. Faithfulness in little things prepares for larger usefulness and higher position.
5. Faith in God, obedience, and faithfulness lead to wisdom.
6. If one is fitted for a place, he will in time come to the place for which he is fitted.
7. We shall forget our earthly sorrows in the exceeding great blessings God gives us through them.
8. In times of prosperity and plenty prepare for adversity.
9. This life is the place in which to prepare for the life to come.
10. There will always come a famine in this earthly land, when the soul will be starving for spiritual food.
11. Jesus Christ has plenty and to spare for all who will come to him.

LESSON VIII. — NOVEMBER 21, 1880.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN. — GEN. 44:30-34; 45:1-8.

TIME. — B. C. 1707. Two years after the famine began. Joseph had been in Egypt 22 years, of which he had been ruler nine years. Benjamin 23 years old.

PLACE. — Heliopolis, the capital of Lower Egypt; situated on the Nile, near the head of the Delta. It was about 250 miles from Hebron, Jacob's home.

RULER. — Apophis, the Pharaoh of Egypt.

CONNECTION.

When all the corn in Canaan was exhausted, Jacob sent his sons to buy in Egypt; but he kept back Benjamin "lest mischief should befall him." Joseph at once recognized them, but they did not know him. Joseph spake roughly to them, and said, "Ye are spies;" but they repelled the charge, and said, "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies." And on his repeating the charge, with a view, no doubt, to obtain from them further

information, they said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with his father, and one is not." Thus was Joseph's object gained. He wished to know something of his father and of Benjamin, — whether they were alive, and how they fared; and, without asking any questions which might have caused suspicion, he learnt enough to satisfy him for the time. Joseph allowed them to return home to fetch their younger brother as a proof of their veracity, only on condition that one of them should remain behind in chains, with a prospect of death before him should not their words be verified. Then it was, and not before, that they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," &c. Simeon was bound, and left in custody. How deeply concerned Joseph was for his family, how true and affectionate a heart he had, may be learned from the words which escape from the brothers in their entreaty that Jacob would allow Benjamin to go into Egypt, as required by Joseph (43:7). At length Jacob consents to Benjamin's going in company with his brothers. Provided with a present, they went again down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. Joseph's heart melted at the sight of Benjamin. He commanded the ruler of his house, saying, "Bring these men home, and slay and make ready, for these men shall dine with me at noon." "And the man did as Joseph bade, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house" (ver. 16, 17). But the sight of Benjamin overwhelmed the governor of Egypt with emotion, and he made haste to retire from the presence of his brethren. His tears relieved him; and, having washed his face that the evidences of his emotion might not appear, "he refrained himself" from further manifestations of his feelings, and returned, and commanded his steward to "set on bread." And the brethren sat before him. And he sent messes unto them; but Benjamin's mess was five times as much as the others. Fear had given place to wonder, and wonder to joy and merriment. Joseph, apparently with a view to ascertain how far his brethren were faithful to their father, hit upon a plan which would serve to show whether they would make any, and what, sacrifice in order to fulfil their solemn promise of restoring Benjamin in safety to Jacob. Accordingly he orders not only that every man's money (as before) should be put in his sack's mouth, but also his silver cup in Benjamin's. The brethren leave, but are soon overtaken by Joseph's steward, who charges them with having stolen this costly vessel. A search is made, and the cup is found in Benjamin's sack. Accordingly they return to the city. And now comes the hour of trial: Would they purchase their own liberation by surrendering Benjamin? After a most touching interview, in which they prove themselves worthy and faithful, Joseph declares himself unable any longer to withstand the appeal of natural affection. On this occasion Judah, who is the spokesman, shows the deepest regard to his aged father's feelings, and entreats for the liberation of Benjamin, even at the price of his own liberty. — *T. Smith and Kitto*. Our lesson is part of this entreaty of Judah for the release of Benjamin, and the account of Joseph's revelation of himself to his brethren. — We can imagine nothing more perfect for the object of overpowering the sensibilities of him to whom it was spoken [than this speech of Judah's]. In simplicity and touching pathos it excels every composition I ever met; nor can I figure a combination of traits and circumstances more fitted to tell on the heart of Joseph, and to operate as a fit precursor for the emotions which he could no longer repress. Estimated as a mere literary composition, we can see nothing to equal this in Sterne or Shakspeare or Mackenzie, or any of the greatest masters of eloquence and poetry. — *Dr. Chalmers*.

30. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; (seeing that his life is bound¹ up in the lad's life,)

31. It shall come to pass, when

he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

¹ 1 Sam. 18:1; 25:29.

EXPLANATORY.

30, 31. Judah first rehearses the past. He recalls the former visit, and the conversation of that time (vers. 18-20). He then proceeds to remind Joseph of his command (ver. 21), but for which they had not brought their brother; of their expostulations (ver. 22), and of his firmness of purpose (ver. 23). He then drew the portrait of the old man, described the long time they bore the pangs of hunger before Jacob at last would suffer Benjamin to go; and, having hinted at the loss of one other son, repeated the final words

32. For thy servant became surety¹ for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever.

33. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad² a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me?

lest peradventure I see the evil³ that shall come on⁴ my father.

1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2. And he wept aloud;⁵ and the

¹ Chap. 43: 9. ² Exod. 32: 32. Rom. 5: 7-10; 9: 3. ³ 2 Chron. 34: 28. ⁴ Exod. 18: 8; Job 31: 29. Ps. 116: 3; 119: 143. ⁵ Num. 14: 1.

of the old man (ver. 29). Then he pictures the future. This he was the better able to do from his memory of a former occasion. That picture of sorrow and wail of agony had ever since haunted him. It might be repeated with still more painful consequences. It might hasten the death of his father. He records, without a censure, the endearing union of the old father and his younger brother. There was one life between them. The death or loss of Benjamin might be the death of the father. — *Class and Desk*.

32. Thy servant became surety for the lad. (See chap. 43: 8, 9.) Therefore the passionate entreaty that Joseph would receive him as a substitute of the one who had incurred the sentence of slavery. In all this he makes no parade of his self-sacrifice. He can not and will not return home without Benjamin. So stands he before us in his self-humiliation, in his self-sacrifice. — *Lange*.

33. Let thy servant abide . . . a bondman. The last time Joseph heard Judah speak of his father's favorite was when he (Joseph) was in the pit, and Judah, on the edge, was proposing to sell him into bondage. Now he intercedes to save Benjamin from bondage. — *Class and Desk*. How different was the spirit which he now discovered, from that which appeared in the sons of Jacob when they sold Joseph into Egypt *because* their father loved him better than themselves! Now Judah is willing himself to become a slave in Egypt for Benjamin, simply for the reason that his father loved Benjamin better than himself! Blessed be God, that, though that which has been done cannot be undone, yet the doers of evil may be made in God's sight as though they had not done it! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Let not penitents be upbraided with their old sins. They are not what they once were; and when their iniquities are sought for they shall not be found. — *Bush*.

Chap. 45: 1. Joseph could not refrain himself. "Now at length all the love, which during 22 long years had been pent up in Joseph's breast, burst forth with irrepressible might. — *De Sola*. Joseph can no longer conceal his feelings as a brother. No official garb can cover any longer the brother's heart. Judah's appeal was overwhelming. And now the great object of Joseph was gained, under God, in bringing the recreant brothers to the sharpest sense of their misdeeds, so as the better to prepare them for the glad and gracious discovery of himself as their savior. Joseph did not contemplate severity. He would only be satisfied, by all the tests, that the brothers were in a state of mind to be trusted with his favor. — *Jacobus*. Cause every man to go out from me. He does not choose to have any spectators to the tender scene before him, except those who were to be actors in it. The heart does not like to have its stronger emotions exposed to the view of many witnesses. Moreover, had his servants been present, they must soon have learned what treatment Joseph once received from his brethren; and it was not to be expected that they would so easily forgive the injuries done to their lord as their lord himself could do. — *Bush*. Joseph made himself known. Our Elder Brother aims, in the midst of all our severest trials, to reveal himself — walking on the wave at the fourth watch, standing on the shore when we have caught nothing. Blessed is he who can first cry out, like the beloved disciple, *It is the Lord!* — *Jacobus*.

2. Wept aloud. No doubt, from the fulness of highly excited feelings; but to indulge in vehement and long-continued transports of sobbing, is the usual way in which the Orientals express their grief. — *J. F. and B*. The Egyptians . . . the house of Pharaoh heard. His own suite outside and that of Pharaoh heard him (not heard of it, as some interpret). We must therefore infer that Joseph's official residence was in, or close by, the royal palace. — *Alford*.

Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled¹ at his presence.

4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you: and they came near: and he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold² into Egypt.

5. Now therefore be not grieved,³ nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me⁴ before you to preserve life.

6. For these two years⁵ *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing⁶ nor harvest.

7. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great⁷ deliverance.

¹ Job 4: 5; 23: 15; Matt. 14: 26. ² Chap. 37: 28. ³ 2 Cor. 2: 7. ⁴ Chap. 50: 20. Ps. 105: 16, 17. ⁵ Chap. 47: 18. ⁶ Exod. 34: 21. ⁷ 1 Chron. 11: 14. Ps. 18: 50; 44: 4.

3. I am Joseph. The natural voice, the native tongue, the long-remembered features, would all at once strike the apprehension of the brothers. The remembrance of their crime, the absolute power of Joseph, and the justice of revenge, would rush upon their minds.—*Murphy*. Doth my father yet live? This question shows where Joseph's thoughts were. He had been repeatedly assured of his father's welfare. But the long absence and the yearning of a fond heart bring the question up again. It was re-assuring to the brethren, as it was far away from any thought of their fault or their punishment.—*Murphy*. The "old man *your* father" is now become "*my* father." Before, it was a question of courtesy; but now, of love.—*Alford*. They were troubled at his presence. They were astonished, confounded, terrified; and betrayed their terror by shrinking, as far as they could, from his presence. So "troubled" were they, that he had to repeat his announcement of himself; and what kind, affectionate terms did he use!—*J. F. and B.*

4. Come near to me. A spirit less magnanimous than his might have been disposed, in the midst of all its sympathy, to enjoy the triumph which he now had over them, and to make them feel it. But he has made them feel sufficiently already; and, having forgiven them in his heart, he remembers their sin no more, but is full of tender solicitude to calm their troubled spirits. He bids them approach him, and again assures them that he is their brother.—*Bush*. Whom ye sold into Egypt. This painful event he seems to have mentioned, not in order to stir up new anguish in their minds, but for the sake of convincing them that it was he himself, their *brother* Joseph, and not another; and lest the mention of it should be taken as a reflection, and so add to their distress, he immediately follows it up with a dissuasive from overmuch sorrow.—*Bush*.

5. Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves. A readiness to forgive injuries is a mark of a generous and noble mind. Nothing, therefore, exalts Joseph in our esteem so much as the manner in which he thus addressed his brethren, when, at length, the time had come for making himself known to them as their brother Joseph. Instead of being angry with them, he entreats that they will not be angry with themselves; and, instead of dwelling upon their conduct, he dwells upon God's providence by which it had been overruled for good.—*T. Smith*. It is more beautiful to overcome injury by the power of kindness than to oppose to it the obstinacy of hatred.—*V. Maximus*. As wounds once healed leave a scar behind them, so remitted injuries leave commonly in the actors a guilty remembrance, which hindered these brethren from that freedom of joy which else they had conceived.—*Bishop Hall*. God did send me before you. You sold me, but God bought me for his good purposes.—*Luther*. What they had done for evil, God had turned to good. And now, having repented and been forgiven, as God had shown to them in his dealings, they are now in a state to understand his gracious purposes.—*Lange*. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will."—*Shakespeare*. The decrees of Providence are inscrutable, in spite of man's short-sighted endeavors to dispose of events according to his own wishes and his own purposes: there is an intelligence beyond his reason, which holds the scales of justice, and promotes his well-being, in spite of his puny efforts.—*J. Morier*.

6. Five years . . . neither be earing nor harvest. Ear is an *old* English word, meaning to plough (cf. 1 Sam. 8: 12; Isa. 30: 24). This seems to confirm the view given, that the famine was caused by an extraordinary drought, which prevented the

8. So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but¹ God; and he hath made me a father² to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹ John 19:11. ² Chap. 41:43. Judg. 17:10. Job 29:16.

annual overflowing of the Nile, and of course made the land unfit to receive the seed of Egypt. — *J. F. and B.*

8. It was not you . . . but God. If Joseph's brethren had said, "It was not we that sent you hither, but God," we might justly have pronounced them guilty of daring impiety. But when Joseph is the speaker we recognize the drift of the words at once, and see that they are free from any exceptionable meaning. His object is to intimate that his coming to Egypt was more God's work than theirs; that they were but instruments overruled by him for the accomplishment of his own purposes; that consequently he entertained no harsh sentiments of their conduct, but considered it, and all the effects of it, as a step of divine providence for his good. Their intention was, no doubt, evil; but his thoughts were so much occupied with God's intentions, that he forgot theirs. — *Bush*. A father to Pharaoh; i.e., a wise and confidential friend and counsellor. The caliphs and the sultan of Turkey appear to have given the same title to their grand viziers. — *Brown*. At the very moment when Joseph kindly saw in his brethren only the unconscious instruments of God's providence, he was serving it almost as unconsciously by his plan for securing his father and brethren a safe and happy settlement in Egypt. — *Smith*. This history of Joseph shows how skilfully and mightily God manages the wicked, making their wickedness work (wholly against their purpose) to evolve abounding good. If the Lord were obliged to say, "I must content myself with the co-operation of the good, the unfallen, turning their agency to best account for the promotion of happiness; but, as to the wicked, they are beyond my reach; I can do nothing with them; the evil they do must be endured as so much dead loss to the universe, never to be of any service toward virtue and happiness," — the case would be, so far, one of unrelieved sadness. We may bless the name of our God, that his resources of wisdom and power, and the outgoings of his love, are not thus limited. Some good results will be extorted from even those horrible crimes of Joseph's brethren. Even the Devil's wickedness, in which he exults as availing to frustrate God's plans and to shake his throne, he will find at length, to his everlasting confusion and shame, has been made, by the overmastering wisdom, power, and love of God, to subserve the very cause he thought to break down, and to break down every thing he had vainly hoped to build up! For is not God wiser and mightier than the Devil? — *Cowles*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Thornley Smith's *History of Joseph*; Leighton's *Lectures on Joseph*; Wardlaw's *History of Joseph*; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; *Sermons* by H. Blair, N. Emmons, vol. 4, and Summerfield.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. As the Egyptians first sold their cattle, then their farms, and finally gave themselves to Pharaoh, for food during the famine, and he gave them back to enjoy and to live, only requiring a tribute; so the sinner, starving for food for his soul, gives up himself and all he has to God, and God makes him his own again, only requiring a tribute of love, and gifts for the needy.

II. God's control over human affairs. — In listening to a great organ, played by the hand of a master, there is often an undertone that controls the whole piece. Sometimes it is scarcely audible, and a careless listener would miss it altogether. The lighter play goes on, ebbing and flowing, rising and sinking, now softly gliding on the gentler stops, and now swelling out to the full power of the great organ. But amid all the changes and transpositions this undertone may be heard, steadily pursuing its own thought. The careless listener thinks the lighter play the main thing; but he that can appreciate musical ideas, as well as sounds, follows the quiet undertone of the piece, and finds in it the leading thought of the artist. — *Richard Cordley, D.D.* So men see the outward events of life, the actions, the words, the wars, famines, sins; but underneath all God is carrying out his own plans, and compelling all outward things to aid the music he would make in this world.

III. In the Memorial Hall at Harvard University there is a wonderful array of beautiful sentences frescoed on the walls in various colors, but they are all in Latin. And it is said that some of the workmen did not know the meaning of the sentences they painted,

but could only put the letters and the colors on the walls as they were told, without understanding the wondrous meaning wrapped up in them. So we are often writing our lives in an unknown tongue; we can only do as we are bidden; but in due time there will be read out in some heavenly language a biography we never dreamed was ours, full of glory and blessing. — *P.*

PRACTICAL.

1. We do not fully realize the greatness of our sin, till we feel some of the punishment of it.
2. Much of the punishment of all sin is future punishment: Joseph's brethren were suffering for sins committed 22 years before.
3. Sinful people may leave off their sins, and grow better, as these brethren did.
4. The signs of true repentance must be shown by overcoming the old sins, as these brothers did their envy.
5. Those who have sinned must be tested and tried before they can be received again into confidence.
6. God desires to make himself known to us.
7. We have a Prince and a King for our friend, in Christ.
8. God's forgiving love invites us to come to him.
9. God overrules all things, using the free will of men (not destroying it) to work out his great purposes.

LESSON IX. — NOVEMBER 28, 1880.

JACOB AND PHARAOH. — GEN. 47: 1-12.

TIME. — B. C. 1706, a few months after the last lesson; Jacob 130 years old, Joseph 39, Benjamin 23.

PLACES. — Heliopolis, the capital of Lower Egypt. The land of Goshen, situated east of the Delta of the Nile, the extreme province of Egypt, on the frontier of Palestine.

RULER. — Aphophis, the Pharaoh of Egypt, the last king of the 15th dynasty, in the 54th year of his reign. — *Osburn.*

CONNECTION.

The removal of the chosen family to Egypt was an essential part of the great plan which God had traced out to their father Abraham. The promise had now been given 200 years, and they had neither possessions nor family alliances in the promised land. But they would soon have sought for both; and the character already manifested by Jacob's sons augured ill for their preserving either purity or piety amid the Canaanites. Their present relation to Canaan must be broken off, that it might be formed anew in due time. They must be placed among a people with whom they could not mix, but from whom they might learn the arts of civilization and industry; and there, under the discipline of affliction, the family must be consolidated into the nation. — *William Smith.* From the same valley of the Nile, whence flowed the culture of Greece, was to flow also the religion of Palestine. That same land of ancient learning, which in the schools of Alexandria was, ages afterwards, the first settled home and shelter of the wandering Christian Church, was also the first settled home and shelter of the wandering Jewish nation. Egypt was the meeting-point, geographically and historically, of the three continents of the ancient world. It could not but bear its part in the nurture of that people which was itself to influence and guide them all. — *Stanley.* So Joseph sent for his father and the whole family from Beersheba (rather Hebron, Gen. 46: 1), into Egypt; and God encouraged Jacob by a vision, commanding him to go down, and promising to bring him up again in the person of his descendants, who are henceforth called by the collective name of Israel. So he went down, with his sons and their wives and children, and all their cattle. The house of Israel now numbered 70 souls, without reckoning wives. On their arrival in Egypt, Joseph, after a most affecting meeting with his father, presented five of his brethren to Pharaoh; Joseph next brought his father before Pharaoh, and the aged patriarch bestowed his blessing on the mighty king. — *William Smith.*

1. Then Joseph came and told¹ Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they *are* in the² land of Goshen.

2. And he took some of his brethren,

even five men,³ and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What *is* your occupation?⁴ And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants *are* shepherds,⁵ both we, *and* also our fathers.

¹ Chap. 46:31. ² Chap. 46:28. ³ Acts 7:13. ⁴ Jon. 1:8. ⁵ Amos 7:14.

EXPLANATORY.

1. Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh. That Joseph should inform Pharaoh of the arrival of his family, was essential to the welfare of the state. The king had, it is true, granted permission for them to come; but he must determine in what part of the country they should reside, and must therefore be made acquainted with the fact of their arrival. — *T. Smith.* Joseph furnishes a beautiful example of a man who could bear equally well the extremes of prosperity and adversity. High as he was, he did not forget that he had a superior. Dearly as he loved his father, and anxiously as he desired to provide for the whole family, he would not go into the arrangements he had planned for their stay in Goshen, until he had obtained the sanction of his royal master. — *J. F. and B.* In the land of Goshen. Goshen means "herbage," or "flowers," "the land of flowers." — *Osburn.* The "land of Goshen," also called Goshen simply, appears to have borne another name, "the land of Rameses" (ver. 11), unless this be the name of a district of Goshen. It was between Joseph's residence at the time and the frontier of Palestine, and apparently the extreme province toward that frontier (Gen. 46:29). Gen. 46:33, 34, shows that Goshen was scarcely regarded as a part of Egypt Proper, and was not peopled by Egyptians, — characteristics that would positively indicate a frontier province. Goshen was a pastoral country, where some of Pharaoh's cattle were kept. The clearest indications of the exact position of Goshen are those afforded by the narrative of the exodus. From these indications we infer that the land of Goshen must have in part been near the eastern side of the ancient Delta, Rameses lying within the valley now called the *Waddi-t-Tumeyldt*, about 30 miles in a direct course from the ancient western shore of the Arabian Gulf. — *W. Smith.* Mr. Osburn contends that Goshen was the Delta. It probably included the Delta, but it included much more. — *T. Smith.*

2. And he took . . . his brethren . . . five men. Joseph met them at Goshen, and now proceeds with a delegation to the capital. *Five* was a strong delegation, the rest being left to guard and tend the flocks and herds. This delegation gave the affair an aspect of public and political transaction. — *Jacobus.*

3. What is your occupation? The king's interrogation corresponded precisely with what Joseph had anticipated (chap. 46:33, 34), and their answer accorded with their previous instructions. It was an answer which left them no room to hope for any higher place than to be rulers over his cattle. Their brother was in a very exalted station; but they did not envy him, or wish to share in his grandeur, but readily complied with his advice by telling the king what had been their former occupation. *Shepherds.* The pastoral habits of Joseph's brethren were formed from their youth up. Their principal business had been the tending of their flocks and herds on the plains and in the valleys which surrounded Hebron. With every thing connected with the duties of a shepherd, they were therefore perfectly familiar. We perceive, then, at once, the reason why Joseph directed them to reply to Pharaoh, should he ask them concerning their occupation, that they were shepherds. — *T. Smith.* Shepherds were a set of men whom Pharaoh was taught by his education to abhor. — *Bush.* Whence did this antipathy to shepherds on the part of Egyptians arise? Simply as we think, from the fact that shepherds belonged to the fourth or lowest caste of the people, and that many shepherds were nomads who were constantly making inroads on the territories of others, and committing depredations on their property and persons. — *T. Smith.* Nor can we wonder at Joseph's warning his brethren on their arrival, of this aversion of the Egyptians, who, he assured them, considered "every shepherd an abomination;" and, from his recommending them to request they might dwell in the land of Goshen, we may conclude it was with a view to avoid, as much as possible, those who were not shepherds like themselves, or to obtain a settlement in lands peculiarly adapted for pasture. — *Wilkinson: Ancient Egyptians.*

4. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn¹ in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6. The land of Egypt is before thee;

in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest *any* men of activity among them, then make them rulers over² my cattle.

7. And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed³ Pharaoh.

8. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old *art* thou?

¹ Chap. 15: 13. Deut. 26: 5. Ps. 105: 23. Isa. 52: 4. ² 1 Chron. 27: 29. Prov. 22: 29. ³ 1 Sam. 15: 30. 1 Chron. 29: 20. 1 Pet. 2: 17.

4. For to sojourn. Not to take up our permanent abode. They regarded Canaan as their proper country and the land of promise (15: 13; Deut. 26: 5). **No pasture.** They hinted that they wanted to stay only till years of plenty returned once more.—*Class and Desk.*

5, 6. The land of Egypt is before thee. All that they had sought was a liberty to sojourn in the land of Goshen. The king ordered Joseph to assign them a dwelling-place in the best part of that province. If one district in the land of Egypt were better than another, there let the house of Joseph's father be placed. A truly grateful man will take pleasure to oblige, not only those who have done him eminent services, but also those who are related to them by blood, or connected by friendship.—*Bush.* Men of activity. Of ability, competent to take the management of such matters. Rulers. This might be the imposition of service to remove sense of great indebtedness; or, most probably, elevation at once to an honorable office.—*Class and Desk.* In an open country like Goshen, it would be necessary that cattle should be herded with the greatest care, and "men of activity" were therefore requisite for the task; for indolent and inactive men would have allowed them to stray, and to fall into the hands of wandering marauders. These, then, of Joseph's brethren, whom he could best trust, were appointed to the work, and made not common herdsmen, but overseers.—*T. Smith.* Cattle. Cattle here is used in the comprehensive sense assigned to flocks (Gen. 29: 3), including their *keepers*.—*Bush.*

7. Brought in Jacob his father. What a picture of life and reality have we here! The feeble patriarch, leaning upon the arm of his recovered son, is led into the presence of the courteous monarch, who receives him not as an inferior, nor as a dependent even, but with all the respect due to his great age, and with a reverent feeling that in this very old man, the representative, as it were, of another age, or of another world, there was something of a sacred and prophetic character.—*Lange.* Jacob blessed Pharaoh. We see here the type of the true relation in which Israel was to stand to heathenism in all their future intercourse.—*Kurtz.* The word which we render *blessed* is sometimes used to denote an ordinary salutation. But the salutations used among the pious Hebrews were real prayers addressed to God for the welfare of the person saluted. When one said to another, "Peace be to thee," or, "The Lord be with thee," he expressed his desire in a short prayer to God, for the best blessings to his friend or neighbor. How befitting, how affecting, how richly significant, was the present invocation! "Beyond contradiction, the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7: 7), or greater. In one respect Pharaoh was greater than Jacob; but in another Jacob was far greater than he. He was a son of Abraham, whose peculiar honor and prerogative it was, that he and his posterity should be blessings to mankind. He was also himself a man who "as a prince had power with God and men, and prevailed." The blessing of such a man was of no small account, for God would not suffer his words to fall to the ground.—*Bush.* When Abraham went down to Egypt, unsent of the Lord, he brought trouble on Pharaoh and all his house. But when Jacob, guided and instructed by the Lord, goes down into Egypt, he carries a blessing with him. So when we are in the line of duty, in the path that God marks out for us, we are sure to carry blessings wherever we go.—*Gibson.*

8. How old art thou? The question was, no doubt, proposed in consequence of the indications of extreme old age visible in Jacob's form. The sight of a very old man naturally awakens curiosity; and we feel, almost instinctively, a wish to know how old he really is.—*T. Smith.* In the low-lying land of Egypt, and from the artificial habits of its society,

9. And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and¹ have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11. ¶ And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as² Pharaoh had commanded.

12. And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to *their families*.

¹ Chap. 25: 7, 8; 35: 28. ² Ver. 6. Exod. 1: 11.

the age of man was far shorter amongst the inhabitants of that country, than it had yet become in the pure bracing climate and among the simple mountaineers of Canaan. The Hebrews, at least, still attained a protracted longevity. — *J. F. and B.*

9. The days of the years of my pilgrimage. A pilgrim-journey to an eternal home. With Jacob it had indeed been a pilgrimage. (From Canaan to Padan-aram, — thence to Canaan, — up and down in Canaan, — and now down into Egypt.) Few. The longest life is short compared with eternity, and with men's hopes, expectations, wishes, and schemes (Job. 14: 1). Evil. Full of sin, trouble, change, danger, anxiety. — *Class and Desk.* Not attained, &c. He was now 130 years old; but he had not attained the age of his fathers, Abraham having died at the age of 175, and Isaac at the age of 180, whilst, in comparison with those of their ancestors before the flood, even their ages were but as a few years. — *T. Smith.* Jacob has had a very troublous life, for which he himself has been altogether to blame. His course has not been at all straight, hence his troubles and distresses. And now he has come into Egypt, and how delightful is the evidence we have that Jacob's better nature is triumphant at last over all the crookedness and wickedness of his old nature, as for example in chap. 48: 15, 16! Having committed his way to the Lord, he followed, however feebly and waveringly, the path that God would have him walk in. So we find him at last a saved man: saved from all his sins, saved from all his crookedness and selfishness, saved from every thing that was low and mean in his character, — redeemed from all evil. There is a peculiar light and glory around the closing scenes in Jacob's history. The mind is entirely relieved from all those painful feelings it had in following his earlier career. When we followed Jacob in his youth, it seemed a sad down-come from the lofty ranges of Abraham's life to the low level of Jacob's. But, while there was a descent so far as man was concerned, there was an ascent in the manifested glory of the Redeemer. The triumph of divine grace in the life of Abraham was glorious; in Isaac's history it was blessed too; but the monument of divine grace in the Book of Genesis is the old man Jacob, Israel in Egypt. — *Gibson.*

11. Joseph placed his father and his brethren . . . in the best of the land. Best pasture-land in Lower Egypt; Goshen, "the land of verdure." It included a part of the district of Heliopolis, or "On," the capital, and on the east stretched out a considerable length into the desert. The ground included within these boundaries was a rich and fertile extent of natural meadow, and admirably adapted for the purposes of the Hebrew shepherds (cf. chap. 49: 24. Ps. 34: 10; 78: 72). — *J. F. and B.* The land of Rameses. (See 45: 10.) It is possible that Goshen is here called the land of Rameses by anticipation (Exod. 1: 11), as it may have become familiarly known to the Israelites by the name "land of Rameses" after they had built the city Rameses in it. Very probably, however, the Israelites in the captivity only fortified and strengthened the city of Rameses then already existing, and so fitted it to be a strong treasure-city. — *Browne.*

12. Joseph nourished his father and his brethren. *Sustained, fostered.* The Greek renders it, *he gave them their measure of corn* (or *portion of meat*, taking "meat" in the old sense of "meal"). It is needless to inquire at whose expense Joseph afforded such large supplies to his father's family. He was first just, and then generous. He was entitled to a large revenue, which would enable him to practise liberality to a great extent. In thus performing this office of filial and fraternal care towards his father's house, he made good the title ascribed to him in Jacob's blessing, Gen. 49: 24, of "shepherd and stone of Israel." — *Bush.* Observe (1) how the Lord makes place and time suitable for any crisis which he has appointed. If Egypt must be your country, he will find for you a Goshen. (2) How our New Testament Joseph, our Elder Brother at court, may be trusted to claim

for us at the hands of the world whatever may be for our good. "The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, and he turneth it as the rivers of water."—*Jacobus*. According to their families. In proportion to the number in each household. Throughout this narrative of Joseph, there is a life-likeness in the character of Pharaoh that shows him to us as one of the most veritable objects presented in history. And what an air of reality in all these scenes here so exquisitely portrayed! It is no invented tale. The picture stands out vividly before us; age has not dimmed its colors; remoteness of scene, and wide diversity of life and manners, cannot weaken its effect. We see the figures distinctly moving on that far-off ancient shore. It is brought nigh to us in such a way that we could almost as well doubt our senses as think of calling it in question. At all events, no mythical theory can explain it. No "higher criticism," as it is called, can ever make satisfactory to a truly thoughtful mind, the comparison sometimes drawn between these "Bible stories" and the cloudy fables that characterize the early annals of other ancient nations. We may as well doubt of Cæsar and Alexander, yea, of Napoleon and of Washington, as of Jacob, Joseph, and Pharaoh.—*Lange*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Osburn's *Monumental Egypt*, vol. ii., 97-99, on Goshen; T. Smith's *History of Joseph*; George Lawton's *History of Joseph*; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Gibson's *Ages before Moses*, p. 202. An Egyptian story called "The Two Brothers" has been discovered, which bears a resemblance to the story of Joseph. It is found in the Papyrus d'Orbiney in the British Museum, and is translated in the *Cambridge Essays* for 1858.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

It is a beautiful sight,—old Israel blessing Pharaoh. "Without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater." Was not Pharaoh on the throne of the greatest monarchy of the time? But Jacob blessed Pharaoh as the heir of God; and the heir of God is far greater than the heir of Egypt. Learn further from this picture the attitude of the Bible toward the world. The notice is always kindly, except where there is sin that needs rebuke. In these chapters we see no denunciations of Egypt's wealth and culture and civilization. If some of our modern religionists were in the same position, they would feel called upon to denounce every thing, simply because it belonged to the world. Jacob blessed Pharaoh without any upbraiding.—*Gibson*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Good people always show honor and respect to their parents.
2. Here is an example of brotherly kindness. So Christ "is not ashamed to call us brethren."
3. Jacob was convinced when he saw the wagons from Egypt: they were facts. He who will look at the facts,—science and history confirming the word,—and see what Christ does for nations and for individuals, saving from trouble and from sin, will be convinced of the truth of his words.
4. In every place are wanted men of activity. Christ needs them, the church needs them, the world needs them.
5. Often our days are few and evil because we make them so.
6. Life is a pilgrimage, a journey through the world to our eternal home.
7. The Christian blesses the world,—elevating, helping, teaching, comforting.
8. The best of this world is for the Christian.
9. God gives an abundance to some, not for selfish enjoyment, but to enable them to help others.
10. God's plans are far-reaching, and this coming to Egypt was to prepare a nation to bless all future ages.

LESSON X.—DECEMBER 5, 1880.

THE LAST DAYS OF JACOB.—GEN. 48 : 8-22.

TIME.—B. C. 1689. 17 years after the last lesson. Jacob was 147 years old, and near his end; Ephraim and Manasseh probably about 20 years old.

PLACE.—Goshen, a frontier province of Egypt, joining the Delta on the east.

RULERS.—Aphophis died in seven or ten years after Jacob came to Egypt, and his son Melaneres was Pharaoh in his stead. He reigned but a short time, and was succeeded by Jannes. Joseph still governor of Egypt.

CONNECTION.

The few remaining years of Jacob's life were spent in tranquillity and abundance. He lived 17 years in Egypt, and beheld his descendants "multiply exceedingly." The chief record of this period is his prophetic blessing on his sons,—one of the most important passages in the whole Bible. First, as his end approached, he sent for Joseph, and made him swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but carry him to the sepulchre of his fathers. Soon after this, Joseph heard that his father was sick; and he went to visit him with his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. The dying patriarch blessed Joseph and his sons, in the name of God. He claimed Ephraim and Manasseh for his own, placing them even before Reuben and Simeon, whose lust and violence had forfeited their birthright; and henceforth they were numbered among the heads of the tribes of Israel. Throughout the whole scene, he gave Ephraim the precedence over Manasseh. Thus was added one more lesson of God's sovereign choice to the examples of Abel, Shem, Abram, Isaac, and himself, who were all younger sons. He foretold for them a prosperity which would make them the envy of the other tribes of Israel; and he ended by giving Joseph an extra portion above his brethren, thus marking him as his heir, in respect of *property*; for the *royal power* was given to Judah, and the *priesthood* was afterwards assigned to Levi. The division of these three great functions of the patriarchal government is already a mark of the transition from the family to the nation. — *William Smith.*

8. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these?

9. And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God

EXPLANATORY.

8. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons. Manasseh and Ephraim were now young men. They were born before the years of famine (and were at least 20 years old). And they had been brought up, not like the sons of Jacob, but as Egyptian princes, amid the splendors of a court, having lived, no doubt, with their mother Asenath and their father Joseph, in a style of elegance suitable to the dignity of the family to which they were allied. We cannot suppose, however, that they had never, ere this, been introduced to Jacob; for oftentimes, probably, had they visited the old man, and oftentimes had he spoken to them of the Lord God of their fathers. But now Joseph took them into his father's presence, that they might receive his dying benediction, and hear from his lips once more his testimony respecting the divine goodness and mercy. Such an interview would tend to wean their affections from Egypt, and to induce them to cast in their lot with the members of the chosen race. Jacob's desire was that the sons of Joseph should be incorporated into his family. They were members of it already in one sense; but he wished to have them reckoned in it, not as his grandsons, but as his sons, and, as such, to share in the privileges which would be conferred on his own children. He now therefore formally adopted them (vers. 5, 6). By this act Jacob gave to Joseph the rights of primogeniture. Those rights belonged properly to Reuben; but he had unhappily forfeited them, and now therefore they were transferred to Joseph. Jacob himself possessed the birthright, for Esau sold it to him for a mess of pottage; and, having authority to do so, he took it from his eldest son, and gave it to one who was several years younger. The privileges of the birthright were two,—authority over the junior branches of the family (see Gen. 25:23; 27:29; and 2 Chron. 21:3), and a double portion of the inheritance or estate (see Deut. 21:17). The first of these privileges was not, however, given to the family of Joseph, but was transferred to that of Judah (see Gen. 49:10. 1 Chron. 5:2); the second *was* given to him, for a portion of the land of Canaan was ultimately allotted to each of his two sons. That Joseph should have a double portion of the inheritance, and that each of his sons should be reckoned among the tribes of Israel, was a distinguished privilege. How much better was it for them that they should obtain possessions in the land of Canaan than in the land of Egypt! Had they retained their alliance with the house of Poti-pherah, their names would probably have sunk into oblivion; whereas now they are known throughout the world, and will be known to the very end of time. Nor were they benefited by the change in a temporal point of view only, but also in a

hath given¹ me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless² them.

10. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, *so that* he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them and embraced them.

11. And Israel said unto Joseph, I³ had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God⁴ hath showed me also thy seed.

12. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed⁵ himself with his face to the earth.

13. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand, toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him.

14. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly,⁶ for Manasseh *was* the first-born.

15. ¶ And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom⁷ my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which⁸ *fed* me all my life long unto this day,

¹ Chap. 33:5. ² Chap. 27:4. ³ Heb. 11:21. ⁴ Chap. 37:33, 35; 45:26. ⁵ Eph. 3:20. ⁶ Exod. 20:12. ⁷ Lev. 19:32. ⁸ Ver. 19. ⁹ Chap. 17:1; 24:40. ¹⁰ Ps. 103:4, 5.

spiritual one; for they and their posterity were preserved from idolatry, and brought up to worship, not RA, or NEITH, but the Lord Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. — *T. Smith*. Who are these? Jacob's sight was failing, and he could not see distinctly (ver. 10). — *P*.

9. I will bless them. Impart to them, as the inheritor of covenant blessings, a solemn benediction (27:4). — *Class and Desk*.

11. God hath showed me also thy seed. Mark how Jacob acknowledges the hand of God. He was no fatalist. He recognized divine Providence in all the events of his life, and believed that it was God who had brought him into Egypt. — *T. Smith*.

12. Out from between his knees. That is, Jacob's knees, who had brought them near to embrace them. Bowed himself. Not only in token of his respect to his father, but out of reverence to the divine blessing about to be pronounced. The Greek renders it, *they bowed*, i.e., all three, which is highly probable. — *Bush*.

13. Joseph took them both, &c. From very early times it was the custom for parents to bless their children by the imposition of hands; and it was in this way that Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. But, as was most natural, Joseph placed them before him so that he might lay his right hand, which was the symbol of the highest honor, on the head of the eldest. — *T. Smith*.

14. Israel stretched out his right hand. Israel now oversteps all considerations of age, and lays his paternal covenant right hand upon the head of the younger, and his left hand upon the head of the elder, and blesses them. Joseph interfered as if the father had mistaken (ver. 17), but it was designed by Him who guided his hands. Guiding his hands wittingly. Laying on his hands advisedly, *intentionally* crossing his arms for this very purpose. *Laying on the hand* is here for the first time mentioned in the Scriptures. It is a natural sign of conveying some good, official or personal, spiritual or temporal, as in setting apart to an office, transferring or conveying the dignity or authority (Num. 27:18, 23. Deut. 34:9. Matt. 19:13. Acts 6:6; 8:17, &c.). So it occurs in connection with sacrifices, transferring symbolically the guiltiness; and in cures wrought by Christ and the apostles, significant of conveying the grace of healing. By this imposition of hands Jacob indicates the solemn, formal, official conveyance to Joseph's sons of the primogeniture in the covenant household. — *Jacobus*.

15. And he blessed Joseph. That is, he blessed Joseph in blessing his sons; very much as Ham was cursed in the curse of Canaan. The phraseology recognizes a peculiar identity between father and son. — *Bush*. God before whom my fathers . . . did walk. Before he entails his blessing, he recounts his experiences of God's goodness to him. He mentions the constant care which the divine Providence had taken of him all his days. (1) God had *fed him all his life long unto this day*. (2) He had by his angel *redeemed him from all evil*. — *Henry*. Observe the beautiful humility of Jacob. He does not speak about his own walking before God, but, "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk." He knows that he himself has not walked very closely with God. — *Gibson*. The God

16. The Angel¹ which redeemed² me from all evil, bless the lads ; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac ; and let them grow into a multitude³ in the midst of the earth.

17. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him :

and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father : for this *is* the first-born ; put thy right hand upon his head.

19. And his father refused, and said, I know *it*, my son, I know *it* : he also

¹ Chap. 31 : 11. Isa. 63 : 9. ² Ps. 34 : 22. ³ Num. 26 : 34, 37.

which fed me. The word *fed* is scarcely wide enough to express the meaning. It means God who has *shepherded* me ; who has been my shepherd all my life long unto this day ; who has been guiding me and restoring me and controlling me, as well as feeding me. The faith of the patriarch is seen especially in his acknowledging God as his shepherd through all his wanderings, and through all his sorrows too. He has recognized at last that all these things have worked together for his good. — *Gibson*.

16. The Angel which redeemed me. The Angel cannot be a created angel, but the Angel of God's presence ; the Messenger who spake with divine authority and as himself divine. — *Alford*. The God who fed him, and the Angel who redeemed him, are but one undivided object of his prayers. The title is no doubt here given him with special reference to his interposition in delivering him from the wrath of Esau, on his return from Mesopotamia (Gen. chaps. 32, 33). But it is not perhaps putting undue stress upon Jacob's words to understand them as implying that Jacob was redeemed by this Angel from far worse evils than men ever had it in their power to inflict. He was redeemed from all his iniquities and from their penal consequences. The Angel-Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Saviour-Christ of the New, and who but he has been in every age the Redeemer of lost men ? — *Bush*. The form of the expression shows that Jacob had a consciousness of the presence of God close beside him ; that he did not simply look upward to heaven, and think of God as there, looking down on him, but he thought of God as having been present with him all the while (see Isa. 63 : 9). — *Gibson*. From all evil. Jacob could tell of many seasons of sore pressure, in which the prospect of deliverance had almost vanished. They are connected with the names Esau, Laban, Shechem, Joseph, and the famine. — *Lange*. Let my name be named on them. My name, Israel, the prince with God. Let them be Israelites, not Egyptians. Let them be counted in the tribes as my sons (ver. 6). There is special reference to the blessing of the divine promise on the seed of Abraham and of Isaac. — *Alford*. The patriarch's words no doubt have reference rather to the high appreciation and the real enjoyment of the *privileges and distinctions* connected with their pedigree, than to the mere *nominal title* by which they should ordinarily be known. He expresses his desire that they may be *in deed and in truth* what they were by *lineal descent*. Such honor have all the saints. They are not all Israel that are of Israel, but believing Gentiles are a part of the Israel of God. The name of Christ himself is named upon them. Let us all endeavor to be an honor and a praise to that worthy name by which we are called. — *Bush*. He meant that they were not to remain Egyptians, though naturally they were such, — their mother an Egyptian, and their father ruler in the land. When a young man has what we call brilliant prospects before him, we congratulate him : in the spirit of the Bible we should rather congratulate him when he is called early to do a work, to achieve something, on the side of God against that of the world. — *Robertson*. Let them grow into a multitude. Or, according to the Hebrew (as in margin), "as fishes do increase" (see Illustrative) ; a prayer this which was singularly answered, for at the time of Moses the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh amounted together to 85,200 souls (Deut. 33 : 17. Num. 1 : 33 ; 2 : 19). — *T. Smith*.

17, 18. Joseph presumes that his father has gone astray through dulness of perception, and endeavors to rectify his mistake. He finds, however, that on the other hand a supernatural vision is now conferred on his parent, who is fully conscious of what he is about, and therefore abides by his own act. — *Murphy*. "We, like Joseph, are for setting Manasseh before Ephraim ; but God, like Jacob, puts his hands across, and lays his right hand upon the worst man's head, and his left hand upon the best, to the wonder and amazement even of the best of men." — *Bunyan*.

19. I know it, my son, I know it. Now that Jacob is truly a sanctified man, we find also that his spiritual vision has become wonderfully clear, as is apparent in his dying bene-

shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but ¹truly his younger² brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee³ shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but ⁴God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above⁵ thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

¹ Num. 1: 33, 35. Deut. 33: 17. ² Chap. 25: 23. ³ Ruth 4: 11, 12. ⁴ Chap. 50: 24. Josh. 23: 14. ⁵ Josh. 17: 14.

diction. In this respect it is worth while to contrast him with Isaac. You remember a similar scene in Isaac's life, when his eyes grew dim, and he was about to pass away, and his children came for their father's blessing. Isaac was exceedingly dim-sighted spiritually, as well as naturally. He did not understand God's will, did not really know that Jacob was the chosen son, and wanted all the while to give the special blessing to his favorite Esau. But, when Jacob's two grandchildren are brought to him for his blessing, he knows exactly what the will of the Lord is. **Shall be greater than he.** That the tribe of Ephraim did become superior to that of Manasseh, is evident from Jewish history. On the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, the former tribe numbered 40,500 fighting men, whilst the latter numbered but 32,200. To the tribe of Ephraim, also, was assigned the honor of bearing one of the four great standards or banners of the host, which, in the march through the wilderness, were used as signals, each banner, according to tradition, bearing a device. Then, if we look at the division of the land of Canaan, we shall find that to the tribe of Ephraim was allotted one of the richest tracts of the whole country, a tract which included nearly all that territory which became subsequently known as the land of Samaria (Josh. 16: 5). Within this tract Shiloh was situated, and there the tabernacle of the congregation was set up until the days of Eli the priest; so that the tribe of Ephraim obtained great honor, Shiloh being the spot to which, during this period, the Israelites generally were accustomed, on the most solemn occasions, to repair. How prominent a part, too, did the tribe of Ephraim act in the history of the kingdom of Judah and Israel! (1 Kings 11: 26 Isa. 11: 13.)—*T. Smith.* Ephraim was to be greater than Manasseh; but had Manasseh any reason to be disquieted? He, too, was to be great, though not so great as his brother.—*Bush.*

20. In thee (i.e., Joseph) shall Israel (as a nation) bless (utter a blessing), saying, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh;" i.e., Joseph shall be so blessed in his two sons, that their blessing will become a standing form of benediction in Israel.

21. Behold, I die, but God shall be with you. This is the precious legacy of pious parents to their children,—the covenant presence of their father's God. The point of all this was the important assurance upon which the patriarch's faith fixed, that God would bring them again unto the land of their fathers. Nothing was said about the intervening years of bondage, but only about the issue and result of all. If all is well at last, if we have divine assurance of being brought safely home, this will stay us in our afflictions, and bear us up in the house of our bondage.—*Jacobus.*

22. I have given thee one portion above thy brethren. He conveyed the land of Canaan, which was promised to him and his, to his descendants, but an extra portion he gives to Joseph; i.e., Shechem, which means "portion." Here Joseph's bones were buried after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 24: 32). It was granted to Joseph's descendants (Josh. 17: 14-18). Joseph had two portions, by being counted as two tribes, each of his sons becoming a tribe; while the other sons became each but one tribe. Which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, &c. Bush refers this to some conquest of this country, not recorded in Genesis. But most regard it as prophetic, that he in the person of the Israelites would wrest this land from the Amorites. He states it as so certain as if already done, so strong is his faith in the promise of God.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i.; Schaff's *Through Bible Lands*; Thornley Smith's *Joseph and his Times*; Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Osburn's *Monumental History of Egypt*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. Ver. 16. Let them grow as fishes do increase (*into a multitude*). Fish are the most prolific of all creatures. Any one who attempts to estimate the number of eggs in the roes of various kinds of fish may form some faint conception of the degree in which the sea generates "reptiles with spawn abundant." The old microscopist, Leuwenhock, gave estimates which the mind could scarcely grasp. The greater accuracy of modern research has somewhat moderated his statements; but enough remains to fill the mind with astonishment. Thus, the roe of a codfish has been found to contain nine millions of eggs; of a flounder, nearly a million and a half; of a mackerel, half a million; of the roach and sole, a hundred thousand; of herrings, perches, and smelts, twenty and thirty thousand; lobsters, from seven to twenty thousand. — *Kitta*.

II. Ver. 22. Jacob giving away what he possessed only by faith. Once when Rome was besieged by an army, the richer citizens bought and sold the very land whereon the enemy were encamped, to show the people their faith that Rome was safe, and would yet overcome and drive away her enemies.

III. Old age may be like the declining sun, not so brilliant or powerful as at the noon-tide, but robed in clouds as if all the rainbows of summer were scattered in fragments along the horizon, with beauties and glories which noonday never knew.

PRACTICAL.

1. It is a blessed thing to grow old beautifully and lovingly, so as to show forth that the last days of God's children may be the best.

2. There is a special value to the words of those who stand at the end of life, as on a mountain-top, and view both life and eternity.

3. Ver. 9. The greatest blessing is to be able to bless others.

4. Ver. 15. Thank God for good Christian parents.

5. At the end of life every one who trusts in God will find that God has been his watchful, guiding Shepherd, through however dark and trying paths he may have led him.

6. Ver. 16. We wish for others the blessing of that Saviour who has redeemed us, and who, therefore, we know can redeem them from all evil.

7. Ver. 19. God gives much to all, but, for reasons we cannot understand, he gives to some more than to others. But this is no reason for idleness or envy.

8. Blessed is that faith which acts upon God's promises with the same confidence as if they had actually been fulfilled.

LESSON XI. — DECEMBER 12, 1880.

THE LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH. — GEN. 50: 14-26.

TIME. — B. C. 1635. 54 years after the last lesson.

PLACE. — *Heliopolis*, or perhaps Goshen, where he may have retired in his old age.

RULERS. — Osirtesen III., of the 17th dynasty, the Pharaoh of Egypt (*Wilkinson*). Jannes (or Asses his son) was Pharaoh, according to Osburn. Perhaps one was of Lower, and the other of Upper Egypt.

CONNECTION.

Having pronounced his prophetic blessing upon his sons (chap. 49), and added one more injunction to them to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, Jacob "gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up his spirit, and was gathered unto his people," at the age of 147. After a burst of natural grief, Joseph gave orders for his embalmment, and kept a mourning of 40 days, according to the Egyptian custom. He then went, by Pharaoh's permission, with all his brethren, and the elders both of Israel and Egypt, and a great military retinue, to carry the body of Jacob into Canaan. Avoiding the warlike Philistines, they made a circuit to Atad, near the Jordan, where they kept so great a mourning for seven days, that the astonished Canaanites called the place Abel Mizraim (*the mourning of Egypt*). Proceeding thence to Hebron, Jacob's sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah. On their return to Egypt, Joseph's brethren, fearing the effect of their father's removal, sought his forgiveness, and made submission to him. Joseph survived his father for 54 years, still

enjoying, as we may assume, his honors at the court under the same dynasty, though possibly under a succession of kings. At length he died at the age of 110. He was embalmed, and placed in a sarcophagus, but not buried; for before his death he had predicted to his brethren their return from Egypt to the promised land, and he had bound them by an oath to carry his remains with them. — *William Smith.*

14. ¶ And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15. ¶ And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father¹ was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16. And they sent a messenger unto

Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17. So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee² now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

¹ Chap. 27 : 41. Lev. 26 : 36. Job 15 : 21. Prov. 28 : 1. ² Prov. 28 : 13. Matt. 6 : 12, 14; 18 : 35. Luke 17 : 3, 4. Eph. 4 : 32. Col. 3 : 13. Jas. 5 : 16.

EXPLANATORY.

14. **Joseph returned into Egypt.** Joseph returned to Egypt according to the promise which he had given to Pharaoh (ver. 5). That there was no desire on the part of any of them to remain in Canaan, is scarcely to be supposed; for that land was peculiarly dear to them as their birthplace, as well as on the ground of its being the resting-place of their fathers. But they had pledged their word to return; their little ones and their flocks they had left in Goshen; and, moreover, they were not prepared, as yet, to contend against the Canaanites who held possession of the soil. To return to Egypt, therefore, they were quite compelled. — *T. Smith.*

15. **Joseph will peradventure hate us.** Busy conscience again begins to work, and to fill them with forebodings of vengeance from the hand of Joseph. Though his veneration for his father may have restrained his hands till this time, yet now doubtless he will review the past, and decide that their sin is too great to be forgiven. The light of conscience tells us that we deserve to be requited according to our works; and it is so common for men to requite their enemies in this way, as soon as it is in their power, that it is difficult for us to believe that any will act otherwise when they can do it with safety to themselves. But, however rare, the world yet affords instances of men who love their enemies and bless those that curse them. We do great injustice to a true Christian, if we think him no better than other men. Though there is indeed flesh as well as spirit within him, yet he has learnt to render to no man evil for evil. — *Bush.* Whence came these anticipations? I reply, from their own hearts. Under similar circumstances they would have acted so, and they took for granted that Joseph would. We suspect according to our nature; we look on others as we feel. Suspicion proves character: so does faith. We believe and suspect as we are. — *Robertson.*

16, 17. **They sent a messenger.** The brothers, therefore, taking counsel of their fears, deputed one of their number to Joseph, imploring pardon. It may have been Benjamin whom they sent. It would seem that the aged patriarch, before his death, commanded them to secure such a thorough reconciliation. — *Jacobus.* **Joseph wept.** Out of sympathy with their long-continued and almost incurable sorrow. — *P.* At the fact that they could impute any thing so bad to him. — *Keil.* A noble mind cannot bear to be suspected. To know that any one entertains respecting it other than the most honorable thoughts, is bitterness and grief to it. Yet the best of men are liable to be charged with disingenuousness. — *T. Smith.* He had already from his heart forgiven them, and had given them abundant proofs that their conduct was erased from his memory. Did they imagine that he was for 17 years playing the part of a hypocrite, with words of kindness in his mouth, with gifts in his hand, and malignity in his heart? Were vile suspicions of his sincerity all the return they made to him? — *Bush.*

18. **Went and fell down before his face.** They press their plea with all their importunity, showing every sign of penitence and entreaty. They prostrate themselves before

18. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face ; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants.

19. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not : for *am* I in the place¹ of God?

20. But as for you, ye thought² evil

against me ; *but* God meant³ it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

21. Now therefore fear ye not : I will nourish you,⁴ and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

¹ Deut. 32 : 35. ² Kings 5 : 7. Job 34 : 29. Rom. 12 : 19. Heb. 10 : 30. ³ Ps. 56 : 5. ⁴ Chap. 45 : 5, 7.
⁴ Matt. 5 : 44.

him, making true still further the very dream of prophecy for which they so bitterly hated and persecuted him.

19. Fear not . . . am I in the place of God? i.e., am I in a position to interfere of my own accord with the purposes of God, and not rather bound to submit to them myself? — *Keil*. *Am I in God's stead*, that I should take the law into my own hands, and take revenge? God has already judged them, and moreover turned their sinful deed into a blessing. He assures them of his brotherly kindness towards them. — *Murphy*. Joseph's forgiveness was shown by his renunciation of the office of avenger, — "Am I in the place of God?" Now, this we may make to convey a Christian or a heathen sense, as we read it. It might read, "I will not avenge, because God will. If God did not, I would. But, certain that he will do it, I can wait, and I will wait long years. I will watch the reverses of fortune ; I will mark the progress of disease ; I will observe the error, failing, grief, loss ; and I will exult, and say, 'I knew it, but my hand was not on him ; God has revenged me better than I could myself.'" This is the cold-blooded, fearful feeling that is sometimes concealed under Christian forgiveness. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink." This is Christian revenge. The only revenge which is essentially Christian is that of retaliating by forgiveness. And he who has ever tasted that God-like feeling of forbearance when insulted ; of speaking well of one who has slandered him (pleasure all the more exquisite if the slanderer does not know it) ; of doing service in requital of an injury, — he, and only he, can know how it is possible for our frail humanity, by abnegating the place of God the avenger, to occupy the place of God the absolver. — *Robertson*.

20. Ye thought evil against me . . . God meant it for good. Joseph forgave, or facilitated forgiveness, by observing the good results of what had seemed so cruel. Good out of evil, — that is the strange history of this world, whenever we learn God's character. No thanks to you. Your sin dishonored you, though it will honor God. By our intentions, and not by the results, are our actions judged. Forgiveness becomes less difficult, your worst enemy becomes your best friend, if you transmute his evil by good. No one can permanently injure us but ourselves. No one can dishonor us. Joseph was immured in a dungeon : they spat on Christ. Did that sully the purity of the one, or lower the divine dignity of the other? — *Robertson*.

22. Joseph dwelt in Egypt. At the death of his father, Joseph's age was 56, and he lived after that event 54 years more. But what position did Joseph occupy during his later years, in public life? and what events took place during those years in the national affairs of Egypt? To these questions the sacred narrative furnishes no answer, and for a reply to them we must therefore turn to the records of Egyptian history. Aphophis, the patron of Joseph, reigned *alone* 61 years. It was about the 51st or 54th year of his reign that Jacob and his family came into Egypt ; so that he died about seven or ten years after that event, and consequently before the decease of Jacob. Joseph, then, survived Aphophis many years, and was minister to his successors on the throne, until age and infirmities compelled him to retire from office. According to Manetho, the successor of Aphophis was named Jannes ; but Mr. Osburn thinks that his immediate successor was Melaneres, his son, who is not mentioned in the Greek lists, and who probably reigned but a short time. Jannes, or Unas as he was otherwise called, associated with himself, on the throne of Lower Egypt, his son Asses, who, according to the monuments, was "a most munificent and prosperous monarch." It is highly probable, then, that Jannes and Asses were the monarchs of Egypt during the latter period of the life of Joseph ; and so valuable a servant had he proved to Aphophis, that they retained him in the office which he held, perhaps to the very close of his life. The benefits he had conferred on Egypt were of the greatest value and importance, and they were not forgotten when he became infirm. He was had in esteem to the end of his days. He had been faithful to his king, and not less faithful to his God ; and he

22. ¶ And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house : and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years.

23. And Joseph saw Ephraim's¹ children of the third generation : the children also of Machir² the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die ; and God will surely visit you,³ and bring you out of this land

unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25. And Joseph took an oath⁴ of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26. So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old : and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

¹ Job 42 : 16. ² Num. 32 : 39. ³ Exod. 3 : 16. ⁴ Exod. 13 : 19. Josh. 24 : 32. Acts 7 : 16. Heb. 11 : 22.

went down into the valley of the shadow of death laden with the honors of the world, but at the same time cheered with the smile and approbation of Heaven.

23. Ephraim's children of the third generation. The grandsons of grandsons in the line of Ephraim. — *Murphy. Great-great-grandchildren.* "As Joseph's two sons were born before he was 37 years old (chap. 41 : 50), and Ephraim therefore was born at the latest in his 36th year, and possibly in his 34th, since Joseph was married in his 31st, he might have had grandsons by the time he was 56 or 60 years old, and great-grandsons when he was from 78 to 85; so that great-great-grandsons might have been born when he was 100 or 110 years old." — *Keil.* Brought up upon Joseph's knees. In the margin it is "were born," meaning that they were placed there when new-born for his recognition and blessing. — *Alford.* It means also that they were in a sense considered as his own. — *Bush.*

24. I die, God will surely visit you. Joseph, in faith (Heb. 11 : 22) in the promises of God (chap. 46 : 4), prophesies the exodus, and commands the removal of his own body accordingly. So strong is his faith in the event, that he does not command them to carry him immediately to Canaan. Or perhaps he knows that after his death there would be no one with sufficient authority to carry out such a command. — *Alford.* Joseph says in effect, "Keep my bones in Egypt. Ye shall carry them indeed to Canaan, but not in a mere funeral procession, as the bones of my father have gone. In triumph, not in sadness, shall they go; not as to a grave in a cave, but as to the broad and beautiful land of promise." There was nothing for Joseph to attach his faith to but the simple word of God. And yet, when he is dying, and sees all hope dead around him, he calmly says, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Of this it is said in Hebrew, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." Well has the inspired writer chosen his illustration, — from the zenith of faith and the nadir of sight. — *Gibson.*

25. Joseph took an oath. Made them give a solemn promise under oath.

26. So Joseph died . . . they embalmed him. The origin of the practice of embalming the dead, and the reasons why such a practice was adopted, are questions on which there still exist some differences of opinion. Some suppose that the Egyptians had recourse to it because they were unable to bury their dead during the inundations. Others assign as a reason, that the Egyptians believed that the soul remained in the body as long as the body was preserved. Others imagine, and not without reason, that the custom originated on sanitary grounds, the climate rendering it necessary that the decomposition of animal bodies should be prevented as much as possible. The true reason is to be found in the views which the Egyptians entertained relative to a future state. They, no doubt, believed in the separate existence of the soul after the death of the body, in the doctrine of its transmigration through other bodies, and in the notion that after a time — 3,000 years according to the Greeks — it would return to its former habitation. Meanwhile they supposed that the embalmed body became the habita-



EMBALMED BODY, OR MUMMY. (Wilkinson.)

certain length of former habitation.

tion of Osiris, the god who presided over the regions of Amenti; and its preservation was deemed necessary, that, when the soul had passed through the purifications which it had undergone in Hades, it might find the body (also purified) ready for its reception. That the family of Joseph, however, in having *him* embalmed, intended to give their sanction to these notions, cannot be supposed. They adopted the custom with another object in view,—the preservation of his remains until the return of the Israelites to Canaan. According to the usual custom, Joseph's body, after it was embalmed, was put into a coffin. This coffin, or mummy-case, was probably made of wood; and on the lid of it there would perhaps be a representation of the deceased, whilst the whole of it would be decorated with various colors. — *T. Smith*. Joseph's coffin was, no doubt, deposited in some sepulchral building, and guarded by his own immediate descendants till the time of the exodus. — *Brown*. Or it was placed in the house of Ephraim (the son whom Jacob had preferred); by whose family, in the line of the eldest, it was preserved. — *Smith*. Mummies in ancient Egypt were heirlooms, highly valued. The fragrant odor emitted by the spices in which they were embalmed made them welcome inmates in the halls of entertainment; so much so, that the sepulture was often deferred for centuries, so that many successive generations were frequently ranged upright against the walls of the graced hall of entertainment, in the family mansion. — *Osburn*. Joseph's body was carried up out of Egypt, and finally deposited in Shechem (Josh. 24: 32). The faith of Joseph, and his coffin laid up by them, ready to be carried away according to his dying request whenever God should restore them to the promised land, must have been a constant remembrance to his children and his people, that Egypt was not to be their home. — *Brown*.

LIBRARY REFERENCES.

Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, vol. i.; and Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii. Gibson's *Ages before Moses*; Thornley Smith's *Joseph and his Times*; *Sermons* by F. W. Robertson, vol. v., and Maclaren. On embalming and funerals in Egypt, see Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii.; Osburn's *Monumental Egypt*.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. **Summary of Joseph's character.** — The last of the patriarchs, as Joseph has been called, was also, in many respects, the noblest and the best. His character is almost without a flaw, and there are in it some of the most admirable traits ever exhibited to the world. History has scarcely done him justice as yet; for, though many works have been written on his life, he has not been so often held up as an example of sterling worth as he deserves to be in every succeeding age. Even Christians may learn from the narrative we have unfolded some precious lessons of the higher life: and, as a chapter in Providence, this narrative is replete with consolation; for it shows how God is ever with the truly good and faithful man, and how he gives him the victory even when it seems as if he were forgotten and cast off. Jehovah was with him; and therefore, as a modern writer has said, "he was a slave, and yet a free man; unfortunate, and yet a child of fortune; abandoned, yet still standing firm in the fiercest temptations; forlorn, yet still in the presence of God; an object of impending wrath, yet still preserved alive; a state prisoner, and yet a prison-keeper; every way subdued, yet ever again superior to his condition." But to return. The Lord was with Joseph to the last. He was always, great, and always, through faith, victorious over evil and sin. His trials were such as few men are called to bear; but he rose superior to them,—the trials of adversity, and the still greater trials of prosperity, only serving to bring out the noble qualities of his mind. That a life so transparent and beautiful as that of Joseph should be typical of the life of our Lord, is not surprising. A Continental writer presents not less than 22 points of resemblance between Joseph and Christ, and an ingenious mind would probably find many more. But it is in general rather than minute particulars that we must look for the parallel. In his self-sacrificing spirit, in his love for his brethren, in his readiness to forgive, in his providing for the necessities of a numerous people, in his elevation to the government of a mighty nation, and in the wisdom with which he administered its affairs, we can now see set forth the greatness of the Redeemer of the world; but, as the antitype is always superior to the type, so Christ is in every respect far above Joseph, and to him, therefore, *every knee* must bow, and every tongue confess. — *Thornley Smith*.

II. **These all died in faith.** — "Having seen them," the promises, "afar off." Yes, 400 years. Some of us would find it hard to look ahead 400 days, or even 400 hours. How many of us would be willing to identify ourselves with a cause which must be a miserable failure in our lifetime, and which could only begin to succeed two or three centuries or more

after we had gone to our graves? Why, the hearts of Christians, in the present day of little faith, will begin to fail them if they have to wait 10 or 20 years before they see the fruit of their labors in heathen lands. If signal success does not attend at once a new and difficult enterprise, there are many degenerate sons of the father of the faithful, who wish at once to sound a retreat and abandon the work. We need a revival of patriarchal faith in these days,—days of so many and such wonderful far-off things,—telescopes, telegraphs, telephones, but of little of the far-off faith and hope of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. — *Gibson*.

PRACTICAL.

1. Past sins are a continual source of trouble.
2. Only the complete and perfect forgiveness of God and man can save us from our sins and their consequences.
3. No one can forgive our sins but the one against whom they have been committed.
4. The good love to forgive, even as God loves to forgive all who will repent and come to him.
5. Those who truly forgive, forget as well as forgive.
6. The moral quality of our actions depends on our motives, and not on the results that God may bring out of them. Many a child is punished for the results of his action, when, had the results accidentally been different, he would have been praised. God is never guilty of such injustice.
7. God is able to bring good out of men's evil; a blessed comfort to all his children.
8. Joseph teaches us faith in God,—a faith that fails not, though the fulfilment of the promises is long delayed.
9. We never understand God's dealings with us, except when we realize that with him a thousand years are as one day.

PROPER NAMES FOUND IN THE LESSONS, WITH PRONUNCIATION AND SIGNIFICATION.

Aă'rôn, lofty, inspired.
 Âbēl, breath, vanity.
 Ā-bīm'ē-lēch, the king's father.
 Ā'brām, high father.
 Ā'brā-hām, father of a multitude.
 Ād'ām, red earth, earth-man.
 Ād'māh, earthy, red.
 Āgrīp'pā, painfully born.
 Ā'nēr, a boy.
 Ān'drew, strong, manly.
 Ām'rāphēl, keeper of the gods.
 Ām'ō-rites, mountaineers.
 Ār'ārāt, holy ground.
 Archēlā'ūs, prince of the people.
 Ās'ēnāth, worshipper of Neith, or wisdom.
 Āsh'ēr, happy, fortunate.

Bār-jō'nā, son of Jonah.
 Bē-ēr'shē-bā (or Bē'-ēr-shē'ba), well of the oath.
 Bēn'jā-mīn, son of the right hand.
 Bēth-āb'ā-rā, house of passage, the ferry.
 Bēth-ā-nŷ, house of dates, or house of affliction.
 Bēth'ēl, house of God.
 Bēth'le-hēm, house of bread.
 Bēthsā'īdā, house of fish.
 Bīl'hāh, confused, faltering.

Cāin, offshoot, possession.
 Cā'nāan, merchant; low, or bowed down.
 Cā'nāan-ites, lowlanders.
 Cā-pēr'-nā-ūm, the village of Nahum.
 Cē'phās, a stone.
 Cē'sār, hairy, or blue-eyed.
 Cēsārē'ā Philip'pī, named after Cesar and Philip.
 Chāldēes', belonging to Chaldaea.
 Chēdōrlā'ōmēr, handful of sheaves.
 Chō-rā'zīn, the secret; or, here is a mystery.
 Christ, anointed.
 Cōrne'līus, of a horn.

Dām-ās'cus, activity.
 Dān, judge.
 Dān'īēl, God is judge.
 Dā'vīd, beloved.
 Dō'than, two wells.

Ē'dēn, pleasure or delight.
 Ē'dōm, red, earthy, or of blood.

Ē'gypt, land of the Copts.
 Ē'lām, endless duration.
 Elēā'zēr, help of God.
 Elī'jāh, my God is Jehovah.
 Ēm-mā'ūs or Ēm'-ma-us, warm baths.
 Ēph'-rāīm, fruitful or twin land.
 Ēph'rāth or Ēph'rātāh, fruitful field.
 Ēph'rōn, fawn-like.
 Ē'sāu, hairy, rough.
 Ēsh'cōl, bunch of grapes.
 Ē'sēk, contention.
 Ēs'thēr, a star.
 Ēū-phrā'tēs, good and abounding river.
 Ēve, life.
 Ex'ōdūs, the departure.

Fē'līx, happy or prosperous.

Gād, fortune, or a troop.
 Gād'ārā, surrounded, a wall.
 Gāl'-ī-lēe, a circle.
 Gē'rār, a grain.
 Gērgēsēnes, dweller in Gergasa.
 Gēr'ī-zīm, cutters.
 Gēth-sēm'ā-nē, oil-press.
 Gīl'ē-ād, a hard, rocky region.
 Gōl'gōth-ā, a heap of skulls.
 Gōmōr'rāh, submersion.
 Gō'shēn, the land of flowers.

Hā'ī.
 Hām, heat, sunburnt.
 Hā'rān, singing.
 Hē'brews, from over the river.
 Hē'brōn, friendship.
 Hēr'mōn, projecting peak.
 Hēr'ōd, son of the hero.
 Hīe'tite, from Heth, fear.
 Hō'bāh, secrecy, hiding-place.
 Hō'rēb, a desert.

Ī'sāac (Ī'zāc), laughter.
 Ī-sā'īāh, the salvation of the Lord.
 Īs-cār'ī-ōt, of the town of Iscariot.
 Īsh'mā-ēl, heard by God.
 Īs'rā-ēl, warrior, prince, contender with God.
 Īs'sā-chār, he brings reward.

Jāb'bōk, pouring out.
 Jā'cōb, the supplanter.
 Jā'phēth, enlargement.

SCRIPTURE PROPER NAMES.

Jērēm'āh, the Lord throws down.
Jēr'ī-chō, city of the moon, or place of fragrance.

Jē-rū/sā-lēm, habitation of peace.

Jē'sūs, Saviour.

Jews, derived from Judah.

Jōhn, grace of the Lord.

Jō'nāh, a dove.

Jō'rām, elevated.

Jōr'dān, flowing down, the descender

Jō'sēph, increase.

Jū'dāh, praised, celebrated.

Jū'das, the praise of the Lord.

Jū-dē'a, derived from Judah.

Kē'drōn, black or sad.

Lē'āh, weary.

Lōt, a veil or covering.

Lūke, luminous.

Luz, separation, departure.

Mā'chīr, sold.

Māch/pēlāh, double, or a portion.

Māgdālē'nē, of Magdala, a tower.

Māl'āchī, messenger of Jehovah.

Mā-nās'sēh, forgetting.

Mām'rē, fat.

Mār'k, polite, shining.

Mār'thā, the ruler of the house, a lady.

Mā'ry, a tear, star of the sea.

Mātth'ew, a reward.

Mēlchīz'ēdēk, king of righteousness.

Mēs-sī'āh, anointed.

Mīd'tānītes, people of Midian, strife.

Mīl'cāh, queen, or counsel.

Mō'rēh, teacher.

Mōrī'āh, God has made it seen.

Mō'sēs, taken out of the water.

Nā'hōr, snorting.

Nāph'tā-lī, my wrestling.

Nā-thān'a-ēl, the gift of God.

Nāz-ā-rēne', a flower, native of Nazareth.

Nāz'ā-rēth, separated, branch.

Nīn'ē-vēh, abode of Ninus.

Nō'āh, rest, comfort.

Ōl'ī-vēt, abounding in olives.

Ōn, force, ability.

Pā'dān-ā'rām, the plain of Aram or Syria.

Pāl'ēs-tine, of Philistia, wandering.

Pēn-ū'ēl, place of God.

Pēr'izzites, agricultural villages.

Pē'tēr, a rock.

Phā'raōh, from Phra, the sun.

Phār'ī-sēe, separated.

Phīl'ip, warlike or lover of horses.

Phīl'is'tines, strangers or sojourners.

Pī'lāte, who is armed with a dart.

Pot'ip'hār, belonging to the sun.

Pōtīph'ērāh, belonging to the sun.

Rā'chēl, a ewe.

Rā'mā, high, high place.

Rām'ēsēs, son of the sun.

Rēhō'bōth, spaces, wide places.

Sād'dū-cēes, followers of Zadoc.

Sā'lēm, peace.

Sā'rāh, princess.

Sā'tān, adversary.

Sēth, substitute.

Sī'chēm, shoulder, ridge.

Sīd'dīm, valley of the plains.

Sī'dōn, fish-town.

Sīm'ēon, listening.

Sī'nāi or Sī'nāi, jagged, or thorn bush.

Sīt'nāh, accusation.

Shē'chēm, shoulder, ridge.

Shēm, name.

Shī'lōh, sent, place of rest.

Shī'nār, land of the two rivers.

Sōd'ōm, burning, vineyard.

Tē'rāh, a station.

Tībēr'ias, son of the Tiber.

Thōm'ās, a twin.

T-re, a rock.

Ūr, fire, a castle.

Zāph'nāth-pānē'āh, belonging to wisdom, pure.

Zēbō'im, hyenas.

Zēchār'āh, whom Jehovah remembers.

Zēb'ūlōn, a habitation.

Zū'pāh, a dropping, distilling.

Zō'ār, smallness.

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